BRUTALLY HONEST PERSONALS: All true. All desperate.
PAGE 136

JOHN KERRY, POLITICAL BADASS →
By CHARLES P. PIERCE

Esquire

Man at His Best

June 2004

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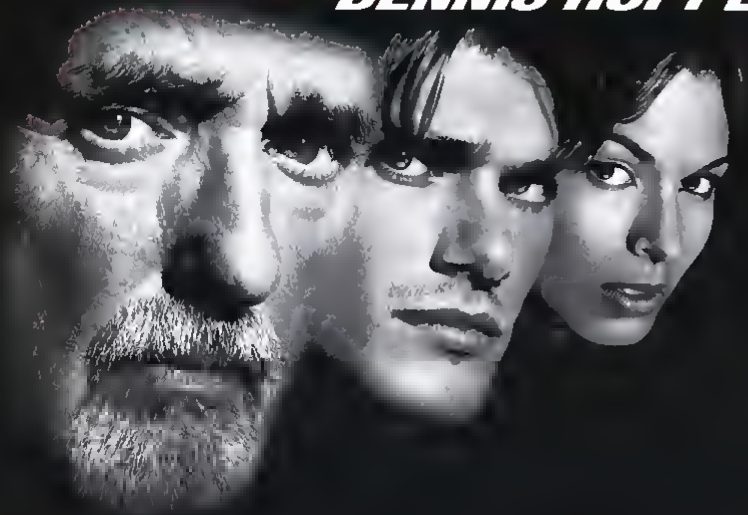

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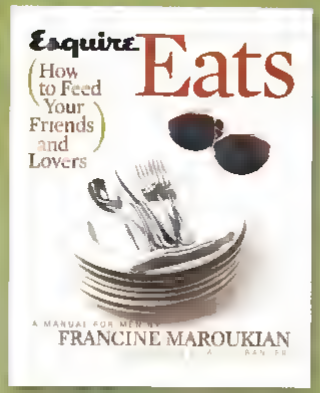

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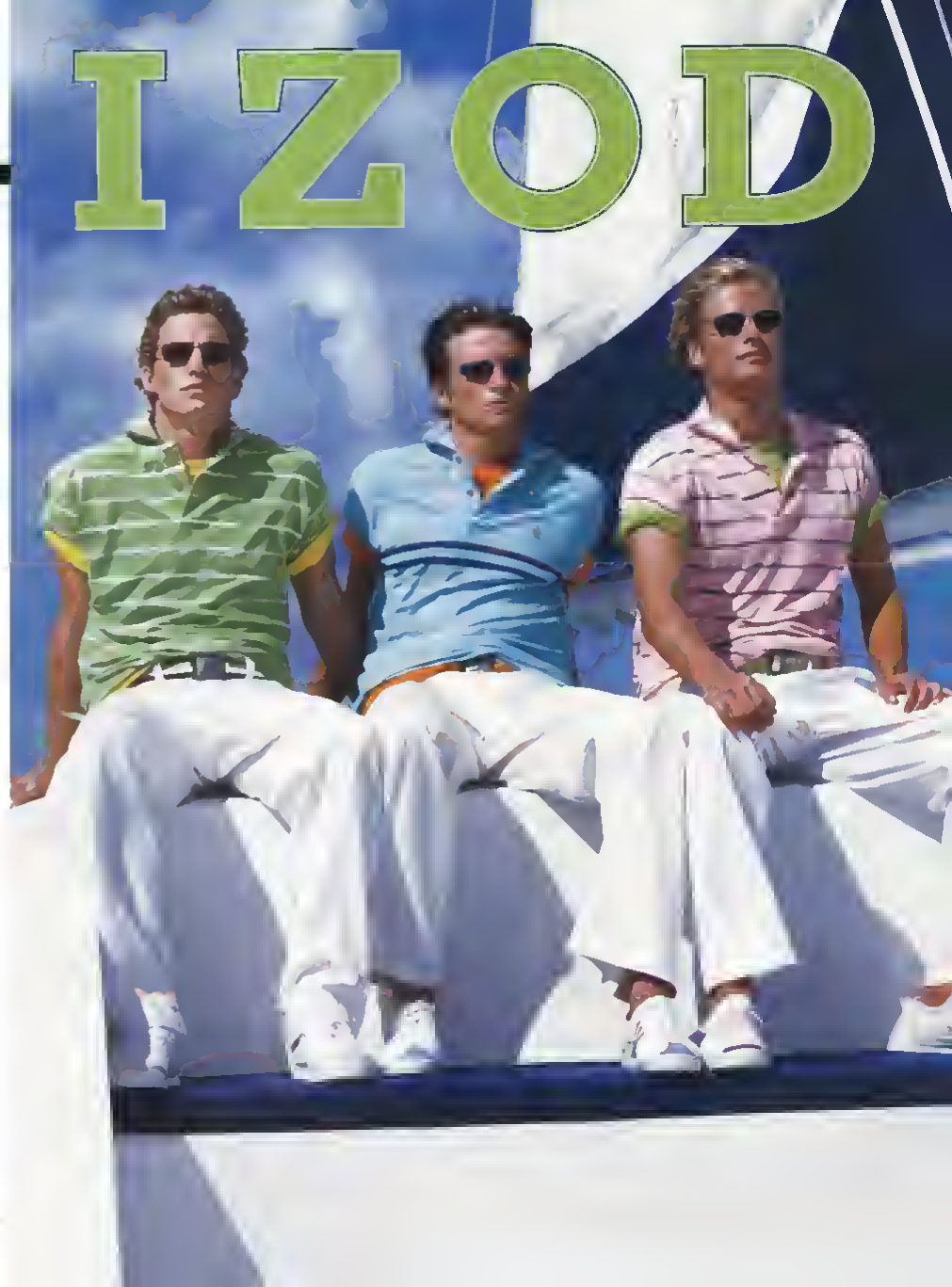
Esquire Eats will be in bookstores on June 7th. To pre-order a copy, please log onto the Barnes & Noble web site at www.BN.com



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ON THE COVER: Carmen Electra photographed exclusively for Esquire by James White. Styling by Cher Coulter. Makeup by Karan Mitchell for Dior/celestineagency.com. Hair by Cemal at Sally Hershberger. Inset: Photograph by Platon

BY INVITATION ONLY {A SPECIAL PROMOTION FOR ESQUIRE READERS}

SOUTH BY SOUTHWEST MUSIC FESTIVAL

On March 20th, Esquire and **XM Satellite Radio** hosted a concert at the South By Southwest Music Festival. The concert was broadcast live on **XM Satellite Radio** and featured an incredible line up of music including Los Lobos, The Old 97's, Patty Griffin, The Mavericks and Ozomatli.

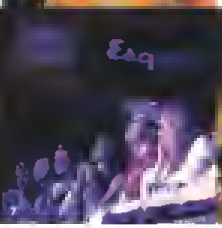
The concert, which was held at legendary Stubbs BBQ, drew over 5,500 guests including Natalie Maines of The Dixie Chicks and some of the top music executives from around the country.

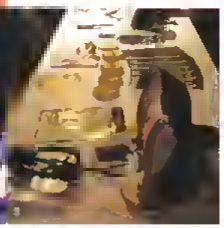
For more information on the South By Southwest Music Festival, logo onto SXSW.com.

XM Satellite Radio is America's most popular satellite radio service that gives you the power to choose what you want to hear—wherever and whenever you want it. To find out how you can get **XM Satellite Radio**, log onto www.xmradio.com.

1. Acclaimed Folk Singer/Songwriter **Patty Griffin**. **2.** Austin music fans enjoying the event at Stubbs BBQ. **3.** XM Satellite Radio technology was showcased throughout the event to guests. **4.** Fan favorite Ozomatli performs. **5.** **Rhett Miller** of The Old 97's. **6.** Esquire's **Jacob Brown**, New Line Music's **Genevieve Morris**, Esquire Editor-in-Chief **David Granger** and Esquire's Merchandising Manager **Julie Getz**. **7.** Fans in the front row enjoying the 5-hour concert. **8.** XM Satellite Radio promotion table where they showcased their technology to music fans.

SATELLITE RADIO





PHOTOS: RED T; Curry Studio Pennsylvania

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An illustrated guide to neckties, page 57. Clockwise by ends, from top: Silk ties by Etro, Brioni, Kiton, Polo by Ralph Lauren, Luigi Borrelli, Ermenegildo Zegna, Cornelani, Nautica, Tino Cosma, Ralph Lauren Purple Label, Salvatore Ferragamo, Charvet, Canali, Façonnable, Gianluca Isaia, Hickey Freeman, Luciano Barbera, and Estate by Robert Talbott

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Style

Everything you need to know about neckwear: the importance of width, how to achieve a full Windsor, and the superlatives of the seven-fold tie **(The Guide, page 57)**. A stylish poolside showcase of the summer's best new wristwatches, featuring sleek steel automatics, intricate chronographs, and sound diver's models **(Summer Time, page 130)**. Esquire tracks the Baja 1000 to road test the hot season's hottest clothes **(The Road to Ensenada, page 140)**.

PHOTOGRAPH BY NIGEL COX

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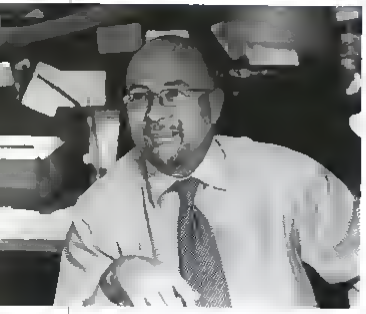
(Editor's Letter)



The Ride to Summer

YESTERDAY, ON A COLD APRIL SUNDAY, I took a borrowed Chevy SSR and made a pilgrimage to the Red Rooster up in Brewster, New York. I will (uncharacteristically) refrain from saying anything overwrought along the lines that the Red Rooster is the greatest hamburger stand in the country. (Stewart's down in Tuckerton, New Jersey, is damn good, too.) But the Red Rooster is one of the defining elements of my enjoyment of summer, and this time of year I am desperately impatient for the season to begin.

For years, I have worked extremely hard at perfecting the art of summer, and on pages 108 to 129, we have taken the hard-earned wisdom of the Esquire staff and put together a few practical suggestions for putting more summer into your life and the lives of your friends. I have to admit that many of these suggestions have been painstakingly tested in my own backyard. I have sacrificed many an evening to personally taste test tequilas so that you don't have to (favorites: Corazón añejo, Patrón añejo, Chinaco añejo, Don Julio 1942). I have played hours of bitterly contested beanbag (usually with a glass of tequila nearby) so that your enjoyment of the game will be seamless and immediate (see rules, page 119). My colleagues Brendan Vaughan and Terrance Noland, who did the work of putting the section together, have made similar sacrifices.

We also relied on the rigorous legwork of many of our writers—done over lifetimes of eating on the fly—to offer you an opinionated guide to the best roads in America on which to take a summer drive with the express intention of, you know, eating.

Summer is never just a matter of degrees and a little more light at the end of the day. It's mostly a state of mind. A subtle ratcheting back. It's a season of savoring. Instead of rushing inside, we sit on the porch for an extra minute. In anticipation of the most enjoyable season of the year, we take a few pages of this issue and celebrate it.

YOU KNOW, if you fall out of the habit of going to hear music live—or if you go only to the big venues—you forget how elemental, how thrilling, it can be to hear true talent up close.

In our April issue, we included a special mini magazine about the great live-music cities in America. We deliberately decided to leave two cities out because they're just too obvious. One of them was New York, because of the wealth and variety of its live music. And the other was Austin.

I got to experience firsthand the overwhelming argument for Austin's special status when Esquire took part in one of the great music events of the year, South by Southwest. This was the eighteenth year of the ultimate alternative music festival, and I've been hearing about it for the last six from associate editor Christopher Berend.

This year, Chris worked with SXSW, XM Satellite Radio, and Stubb's BBQ to put together one of the great showcases of the festival. It was headlined by Los Lobos, which is celebrating thirty years of playing together (and playing a distinctive brand of rock 'n' roll that it invented) with a new record, *The Ride*. The band's performance—which came at the end of a night on which close to five thousand people passed through Stubb's backyard (capacity twenty-two hundred)—made an irrefutable argument for Los Lobos' immediate inclusion in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

The show opened with Ozomatli, which had begun the week by unintentionally sparking a riot after one of its performances spilled into [*continued on page 22*]

PHOTOGRAPH BY EDWARD KEATING

It didn't seem right to us, either.

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No gimmicks. Just great music. At our showcase during South by Southwest, Steve Berlin of Los Lobos (top left) ran through a new song off the band's upcoming record, while bandmates Cesar Rosas (top right) and David Hidalgo (middle) rattled off some of the meanest guitar licks utered the entire week of the festival. Not to be outdone, Ulises Bella and Jiro Yamaguchi of Ozomatli (bottom right) got the night started before jumping into the crowd to lead a few thousand fans in a funked-up rendition of "The Chicken Dance."

[*continued from page* 18] the street and instigated a police response that put two of the band members and their manager in jail. "Free the Ozo Three" became the rallying cry of the festival. Ozo plays multicultural, politically charged funk of the highest order. The band's new record, *Street Signs*, is out later this month.

Ozo was followed by the reunited Mavericks. Like Ozo, they're not easily categorized—some combination of country and rock. But one thing is undeniable: Lead singer Raul Malo is the greatest country rock crooner since Roy Orbison. He's also one of the most graceful big men in music. They're touring this summer to promote their self-titled sixth album.

Patty Griffin, Austin home girl and Grammy nominee, followed. Her voice and her storytelling had me feeling as if I needed to apologize. To someone. For something. Her new record, *Impossible Dream*, is out now. Then came the Old 97's, with their high-end garage-band rock.

The amazing thing about our show was that it was completely about the music: played live in front of an appreciative audience. No gimmicks, no lip-synching. Just amazingly talented people onstage, making beautiful noise. Every one of these acts is worthy of inspiring a road trip this summer.

WE'RE ALSO CELEBRATING this month the achievement of Esquire's staff and contributors. Esquire was recently nominated for seven National Magazine Awards. Only one monthly magazine has ever been nominated for more awards in a single year. (As it happens, that was us, too, three years ago.) Particular kudos go to:

TOM JUNOD, who was nominated in feature writing for his extraordinarily moving story "The Falling Man," from the September 2003 issue.

TUCKER CARLSON, whose very first story for Esquire—"The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen" (November 2003)—about an odd peace mission to Liberia—was also nominated for feature writing.

BILL ZEHME. I remember waiting outside my daughters' middle school to pick them up one Saturday afternoon, reading a draft of Zehme's "The Confessions of Bob Greene" (April 2003). I found it one of the most moving profiles ever written about a man whose life was slipping away from him. It's gratifying that it was recognized for profile writing.

THE ESQUIRE ART DEPARTMENT (John Korpics, Christopher Martinez, Nancy Jo Iacoi, David Carthas, Dragos Lemnei, Adivije Sheji, and Kim Forsberg), nominated again for design excellence.

We were also nominated for the top awards in reviews and criticism (for three columns by **TOM CARSON**) and in fiction (for short stories by **STEPHEN KING**, **ARTHUR MILLER**, and **GEORGE SAUNDERS**).

And, finally, a special bow to **TOM CHIARELLA**, whose "The $20 Theory of the Universe" (March 2003), one of the most useful and entertaining service articles of all time, was nominated in the category of leisure interests.

—DAVID GRANGER

TOP LEFT: TRACI GOUDIE. ALL OTHER PHOTOGRAPHS: FRANK CURRY

John Sack

(1930–2004)

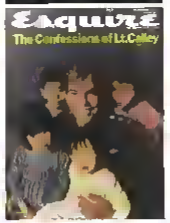
Esquire's legendary war correspondent, a founder of New Journalism, covered every conflict from Korea to the war on terrorism

ONE DAY A FEW YEARS AGO, John Sack came by the office and we went to lunch at a fish place a few blocks away. It was a spectacular late-summer day in New York. John had just recently had back surgery and was a little hobbled, but, still, he wanted to see the city on foot, so arm in arm we headed for Fifth Avenue. He was full of talk about having to recuperate so that he wouldn't miss a single day of skiing come winter out in Ketchum, Idaho, where he lived, and about stories that he just had to write, and about putting the finishing touches on *The Dragonhead*, his next book, and did I know that he was first and foremost a humorist? We rolled down past St. Patrick's Cathedral, and the sun was bright, and John just gave off his own light, too: the whites of his eyes and his teeth sort of glowed. Such was his enthusiasm that he made everything seem possible. And almost without fail, everything was possible with John Sack. This was the John Sack, after all, who was the only person to have reported from every American war since Korea. This was the man who had written epically, from Vietnam, about the grunts of M Company (October 1966)—at thirty-three thousand words, the longest story that will ever be published in this magazine. Arnold Gingrich, Esquire's founding editor, was in such awe of the piece that he could compare it only to Fitzgerald and Hemingway. This is the man who conducted the historic interviews with Lieutenant William Calley (November 1970), the only man convicted for the massacre at My Lai. John risked prison when he refused to turn over his tapes to Calley's prosecutors on the grounds that in America, journalists are not agents of the government. This was the John Sack who was the only journalist in an armored vehicle during the ground phase of the first Gulf war, and thank God for it, because he alone captured the utter chaos of operations there. And when an imperious editor asked John to make a damaging and unnecessary change to his story, "C Company" (December 1991), out of fear of litigation, John said, "I am not going to change the truth for you. With all due respect, please shove that change up your ass." That was John Sack—courtly yet vehement, dogmatically honest, a man of conscience, and almost always right. This was the man, after all, who, when the confines of conventional journalism proved too restrictive to capture the truth and too dull to permit literature, broke the mold and, with a few fellows named Mailer, Talese, and Wolfe, created New Journalism, or what he liked to call literary journalism.

Well, John recovered from his back surgery in time to ski that winter, and he kept causing trouble by committing journalism. He even went to war again, trudging up the peaks surrounding the Shah-i-Kot Valley in Afghanistan with the grunts from Fort Drum, New York, to give a definitive account of Operation Anaconda, the bloodiest battle of the war (August 2002). And he never lost a step as a writer, and his buoyant voice never flagged, and he had so much more work to do, more truth to tell, when he died in late March after a tough illness. And because he was that John Sack, and because he wasn't nearly finished showing us how it's done, we of course never said a proper goodbye.

So goodbye, John. We are humbled to have known you. Thanks for your inspiration and your example and for helping to save journalism. Readers who have never heard your name owe you a great debt of gratitude. We miss you and will remember you.

—MARK WARREN



John Sack's landmark Esquire series, October 1968, and his epic profile of M Company in Vietnam, and November 1970, his story on his interviews with Lieutenant William Calley following the massacre of civilians at My Lai.

Sack's classic story "M," and his last piece for the magazine, "Operation Anaconda," are available online at esquire.com

The Sound and the Fury

FRESH FROM EDEN, the lovely Brit Rachel Weisz graced our annual All About Women issue. Also, writer Tom Chiarella conducted a social experiment and found that the world regards you differently when you include some muscle in your entourage ("My Bodyguards"), and author James McManus brought readers back to the table in "Further Adventures in Poker." Finally, U.S. Army major Tom Kinton ("My Life in Baghdad") told of the horrifying daily trials of rebuilding Iraq, and writer Benjamin Alsup debuted a remarkable new piece of short fiction ("So I've Got That Going for Me").

The cover of your April issue was near, if not complete, perfection. Dumbstruck the moment I saw it, I rushed off to my friend's music studio. Inside, other loyal Esquire readers were at work on a song about the aura that leaped from the cover. Like a heavenly choir the song began...

"I wanna talk about Rachel, I wanna talk about her / She's got me struck in April, she makes my motor purr / I wanna talk about Rachel, how she looks, feels, smells . . ."

Before we could get to the second verse, we were all overcome. Falling to the ground, we were speaking in tongues. Then all at once we prayed to the new god of Weisz. We pleaded for visitation, forgiveness. It was the awakening of a new and powerful religion that I think will sweep the world.

ELI SCARBOROUGH
Knoxville, Tenn.

The Importance of Remembering

In the March issue, writer at large Mike Sager offered a riveting account from the ruins of Wildcat Canyon, California, a community devastated by the wildfires of 2003.

America has forgotten how to appreciate tragedy. Maybe the heightened sense of danger we all live with now has desensitized us, or maybe we're just too busy with ourselves to care anymore. But when I read Mike Sager's article "Is Something Burning?" I was deeply moved. Sager detailed a gripping chronicle of just one small group of neighbors caught in a hellish disaster that played in my mind like a film reel. I found myself gasping aloud, groaning in horror, my fingers sweating against the pages, hoping the group would all make it out, as if the story were still writing itself. It was one of the finest articles I've ever read.

I truly appreciate Esquire on so many levels for so many things—beautiful women, clever prose, style and entertainment, world events—but I have an entirely different appreciation for your recent dedication to making personal again the stark sting of tragedy. The wrenching beauty of "Last Letters Home" (February), the unflinching, classic "Falling Man" (September 2003), and now this. Thank you for your efforts, both in journalism and for our culture.

DUANTE BEDDINGFIELD
Dayton, Ohio

Taxing Bad Taste

In April, music columnist Andy Langer suggested a controversial means of encouraging record companies to produce CDs worth listening to: charge more.

I applaud you for having the balls to run Langer's "What Is Music Worth?" (Man at His Best). Should we be paying more for music? I don't know. But if paying a few extra dollars for a CD means that the musicians I like will have a better chance at making it and Britney Spears will finally hang it up, then I'm all for it. And Langer is right. Twenty dollars for the soundtrack to the rest of your life is a bargain.

HANK WILLIAMS
New York, N.Y.

While I admire Langer's love of music and his respect for its many unheralded artists, I was taken aback by his ridiculous argument in favor of raising the price of CDs. Langer seems to think that a few extra dollars on top would serve as a "vice tax," making us less likely to indulge in mindless assembly-line pop. I'm afraid that we can't eliminate poor taste by making our exercise of it more expensive. I'm also certain that a 15 percent increase in CD prices would not correspond to a greater than 15 percent reduction in sales of shitty music. Since artists are paid rates depending on units sold (and be sure that record companies would be loath to commensurately increase the artists' share), Langer's suggestion can only serve to hurt the artists he'd like to reward while further enriching the record companies.

ROMANN WEBER
Los Angeles, Calif.

Rock This Town

In recognizing a few oft overlooked music towns, we found that music fans can be a tough bunch to please.

It has come to my attention that Esquire recently compiled a list of "Cities That Rock" (Things a Man Should Know About Music supplement, April) and that the city of New Orleans was placed at position number eight, after many other cities, including . . . Fresno, California.

Fresno? *Fresno?!*

Are you mad? Fresno does not rock more than New Orleans. Fresno does not "rock" in any way, shape, or form. Everyone I've ever known who's lived in Fresno has had only one ambition, and that is to get out of Fresno.

Has your libations editor been giving you wood alcohol to drink? Tell him to knock it off!

Fresno. Jesus.

CHUCK TAGGART
Los Angeles, Calif.

STYLE AGENDA [A SPECIAL PROMOTION FOR ESQUIRE READERS]

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KING OF THE GRILL SWEEPSTAKES

A summer BBQ without juicy, delicious burgers? Unthinkable. Esquire invites you to kick off the summer social season of grilling, friends and food with our "Tastes Like Summer" recipe contest sponsored by America's Beef Producers. Summer grilling is all about the all mighty burger, the classic summer staple of backyard cuisine.

Nothing compares to a really good burger, made with the finest cuts of beef. Beef is versatile— delicious for breakfast, lunch and dinner, elegant for special occasions, yet comforting for casual meals. As one of America's favorite foods, beef is easy to prepare and tastes great— satisfies the desire for a flavorful food. For more great recipe ideas and beef cookery information, visit www.BeefItsWhatsForDinner.com.

Send us your favorite recipe for the perfect grilled burger. And don't skimp on the details either— let us know the cuts of beef, favorite homemade toppings and secret sauces. Esquire will award one winner with a brand new state-of-the-art Weber Grill.

Send your recipe along with your name, address and daytime phone number to: Tastes Like Summer, Esquire Sweepstakes, 1790 Broadway, 14th floor, New York, NY 10019. All entries must be received by July 15th, 2004.

BEEF

IT'S WHAT'S FOR DINNER®

(THE SOUND AND THE FURY)

Way to go! Pittsburgh really *is* the most rockin' city in America, but for absolutely none of the reasons you mentioned. Not one band or one venue you wrote about is where the real scene is. Your reporter needs to revisit the great town of Pittsburgh and go to Club Cafe or 31st Street Pub and see bands like Black Tie Revue, Shade, and Camera. You lost a lot of credibility with the mention of outdated meathead bands and meathead venues.

MATTHEW MCCOAMICK
Glen Burnie, Md.

The Sound of Muzak

Answer Fella's recent appraisal of elevator music and Muzak as "crap" (Man at His Best, February) elicited a protest from the makers of Muzak, who responded with a collection of music tailored specifically for Esquire and the challenge to us to hear what Muzak is really all about.

In the enclosed package you will find a music CD, titled *Night and the City*, along with a brief explanation of our thinking behind the selections.

I hope this collection of music will finally lay to rest the notion that Muzak "puts out crap." The personal slurs I can deal with, but that comment in a national magazine, a magazine that a great many of our clients read, could do untold damage to our business. The very reflex that led to the Answer Fella making his comment is something that the Muzak brand has been fighting to escape from for a great many years.

As a Brit I think I can say this. I consider Muzak to be one of the great icon brands in the U.S., ripe for rediscovery and reconsideration. Someone in the media is going to cover it sometime soon: it's just too interesting a business story to remain unwritten for much longer. Our use of audio architecture to answer the business question "What does your business sound like?" is truly unique and has raised the bar insofar as the development of business music is concerned.

PHIL SMITH
CHIEF CREATIVE OFFICER, MUZAK
Fort Mill, S.C.

ESQUIRE MUSIC COLUMNIST ANDY LANGER RESPONDS:
Thanks for the CD. I'm flattered someone other than my girlfriend cares enough to send a mix tape. But while I'm generally loath to step into a battle between two entertainment giants like Muzak and the Answer Fella, your Esquire sample program didn't entirely win me over. The good news is that none of this matters. As an "audio architect," you've got the coolest gig in the music biz. In fact, where do I send my résumé?

Letters to the editor may be mailed to The Sound and the Fury, Esquire, P.O. Box 1704, Sandusky, Ohio 44870. Also, Esquire encourages the use of fax (212-649-4306) and e-mail (to esquire@hearst.com or via the Web at esquire.com/talk). Include your full name, address, and daytime phone number. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

Esquire is looking for a few good celebrity photos.

But not the kind of slick images we normally publish. No, we're looking for moments you've captured with your own camera (cell phone, digital, or otherwise) within the past year: Tara Reid inspecting avocados at the Food Lion, for example. Or Rush Limbaugh nursing his nachos at a Dolphins game. We'll publish a gallery of our favorites in an upcoming special issue devoted to photography.

If we select your photos, you will be credited. We'd prefer digital images—just e-mail your JPEGs* to esquire@hearst.com and type "Celebrity Photo Project" in the subject line—but you can also mail prints to Celebrity Photo Project, Esquire, 1790 Broadway, 13th floor, New York, NY 10019.

*Maximum file size: 1 MB. All submissions become the property of Esquire and will not be returned.

(MANatHisBEST)

Funny*Joke from a Beautiful Woman

A chicken and an egg are lying in bed. The chicken is smoking a cigarette with a very satisfied smile on his face. The egg is frowning and looking frustrated. The egg says, "Guess we answered that question."

< As told by DIANE KRUGER

About the jokester: Diane Kruger was born in Germany, lives in France, and plays a Greek. And not just any Greek, but the troublemaking Greek whose face launched 1,000 ships. Kruger—whose body, it should be mentioned, could also launch a few boats—appears along with Brad Pitt in the summer's big-budget Homeric epic *Troy*. A former model and ballet student who previously starred opposite her husband, Guillaume Canet, in his movie *Mon Idole*, Kruger feels for Helen. "I really think she must have resented her beauty, because she wasn't allowed to leave the palace and she was married off at 16 to this man who was three times her age." Kruger has had no such problems. "I haven't resented my beauty. I'd be lying if I said it doesn't help in being an actress or a model." —PENNY WRENN

*Esquire cannot guarantee that this joke will be funny to everyone.

OnStar

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Escalade ESV Platinum Edition is the world's most powerful full-size SUV*—and then some. This is the ultimate Escalade ESV: nearly two feet longer,** with a custom chrome grille and 20-inch chromed aluminum wheels. Inside, it's a penthouse suite with a DVD navigation system, dual-screen rear seat entertainment system, heated and cooled cupholders, and a Bvlgari-designed timepiece. See the new gold standard at cadillac.com/esvplatinum.

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cadillac.com 800.333.4CAD *Based on horsepower and GM 2004 Large and Large Luxury Utility segments **22.5 inches longer than Escalade

(TheAwards)

The SEVEN Most Remarkable Things in Culture This Month

1 Least-Inviting Mattress

[illegible] m Larry Sultan [illegible] a collec[illegible] of the ph[illegible] the San [illegible]

2 Most Disturbing Historical Footnote

"You may st ore the [nuclear launch] codes in your wallet or as one president did wrap them around your credit cards with a rubber band (It is not advisable to leave them in your suit pocket and send it to the cleaners as President Carter did)"

—From the new primer *How to Be President What to Do and Where to Go Once You re in Office*

3 Most Grudging Bequeathal

"I give unto my wife my second-best bed with the furniture "

—From Will am Shakespeare s will ava l able for free download at documentson l ne pro gov uk For three and a half quid ap ece you can also download the wills of Jane Austen Sir Francis Drake Lord Byron and other famous Brits

4 Creepiest Father-Daughter Exchange

Ruth Your penis looks funny
Ted—My penis *is* funny

—From *The Door in the Floor* an adapt ation of John Irving s *A Widow for One Year* with Jeff Bridges as Ted and Elle Fanning as four-year old Ruth

5 Least Breedist Policy

"At Affinia we are committed to creating memorable experiences for every member of the family regardless of their breed "

—From a press release announcing the Affinia hotel chain s Jet Set Pet Program designed to make the furry member of the fam ly feel right at home"

6 Proudest Moment

"I was one of the few women who had not had sex with Jack Nicholson or Warren Beatty Somehow managed to avoid that. So far anyway."

—Cyb ll Shepherd from *Easy Riders Raging Bulls* Kennet h Bowser s film on Hollywood n the 70s out this month on DVD

7 Most Specific Advice

"Airport cart driver/wheelchair assistant $2–$3 per person "

—From *The Irty Birty Guide to Tipping* a handy new pocket guide that explains how much to tip everyone from the skycap to the body piercer

This Month's Object of Desire: THE VOLKSWAGEN R32

THERE'S SOMETHING naughty about this car. I could say it's the zip under her hood, all 240 horses of it, that makes me sweat. Or the fact that she comes only with a six-speed stick. But what really gets me worked up over this spry little German is that you and I were never meant to get this close to her. Sure, we could have copped a feel by traveling to the autobahn, but not until American car nuts deluged VW with catcalls did the automaker decide to bring her over (after first amping up her stroke and endowing her interior with chrome and alloy touches). Flooring this baby is like the fling with the exchange student we always lusted after but never had the balls to go bilingual for. A second chance at last, for only $29,100. vw.com/r32.

The Indefensible Position: Car Helmets Are Cool

I WEAR A CAR HELMET. You read right. A plastic-coated Styrofoam job with a little buckle beneath the chin. It's the same one I originally bought for mountain biking. Put it on in a car and—presto—you've got a car helmet. And you're a fucking idiot. But before you jump to that conclusion, consider this. Wearing a bicycle helmet in a car is far more effective than wearing one on a bike.

What I'm saying is my decision is statistically based. Over an average life span with a typical 80 minutes of driving or 40 minutes of cycling per day, driving a car is four times as likely to take your life. If your average biking time is more like five minutes a day, that makes driving a car 32 times more life threatening. If around 900 annual bicycle deaths can convince us to wear bike helmets, certainly 35,000 automobile deaths should be incentive to try out some creative solutions.

And let's just admit it. We're a little slow in some areas. Seat belts took years. As did headgear in major league baseball and the NHL. Twenty years ago, more bikers had yarmulkes than helmets. Now wearing helmets while skiing and rollerblading is practically cool. Are any of these precautions as likely to save your life as a car helmet? With typical use, no. That's why down in Adelaide, Australia, the government has been working on the first protective car headgear.

Okay, the first few times wearing the car helmet, you feel like a moron. So ease into it slowly and start by wearing it at night. The truth is, almost no one ever notices I've got mine on—except when I'm trying to merge in heavy traffic and I lean my head out of my window so people will make way for the psycho. —DOUG LANSKY

the rules

RULE NO. 325 Never be the one to start—or finish—a stadium "wave." **RULE NO. 438** If you're in the delivery room and your wife's doctor says, "Take a look at this," do not, under any circumstances, take a look. **RULE NO. 698** Disc 2 is the best disc in the box set.

Wet Suits

I OON TOWN AN UMBRELLA, never have I always thought this made me a bit of a freak. Turns out there must be a lot of freaks out there. Why else would three separate companies have introduced water-resistant suits they claim will keep you stylishly dry in a downpour? We're not talking rain slickers. These look like the duds you see strutting down runways. To find out if they truly repelled, I went to Manhattan's Chelsea Piers sports center and put them through some extreme tests. —CHRISTOPHER BEREND

1) The suit: Black three-button ($1,400) by Martin Wynn
The fabric: Gore-Tex
The test: A dousing with a hose
The grade: B+
I know, Gore-Tex has an unfair advantage—like John Nash taking the math portion of the SATs. And true to form, it rebuffed all aquatic advances from the hose and stayed Mojave Desert dry. But could full-body Gore-Tex possibly be comfortable? Kind of. Though it looked like a real suit, it still fit a little like rain gear. I could see myself wearing this if I lived in the rain forest. Or Seattle.

2) The suit: Light-blue unlined two-button ($998) by Paul Stuart
The fabric: Treated cotton
The test: A head-to-toe shower
The grade: A-
I'm pretty sure Paul Stuart didn't intend for this baby-blue number to be worn with a shower cap. But it weathered the shower without bleeding blue. And because it's unlined, it made for a quick dry. Water just bounced off the light cotton, and I air-dried within half an hour.

3) The suit: Black three-button tuxedo ($650) by Ted Baker
The fabric: Treated wool
The test: A few laps in the pool
The grade: A
Putting this on made me feel like James Bond, so I strapped on flippers and did a *Thunderball* impression. Within minutes I had taken on ten gallons of water and my ass was scraping the bottom of the pool. Nevertheless, the suit retained its integrity, everything stayed intact. The inner lining was not as happy, however: it took a day and a half to dry. But I looked so damn good. I ignored the drip.

The Endorsement: Tucks wipes

By Barry Sonnenfeld

FIVE YEARS AGO, Sweetie (the wife) introduced me to Tucks hemorrhoid pads. She changed my life. Growing up, I watched the unfortunate commercial: a close-up of a flaming match being put out by a Tucks medicated pad, whatever that was. It made me sad. It made me feel unclean. And you know what? It was.

You know how when you're done with a plate of ribs or a fine three-pound lobster, you're desperately looking forward to wiping your hands with a moist towelette? Well, Tucks are moist towelettes for your ass. Take an entire roll of toilet paper. Keep wiping until the paper is as clean as when it came off the roll. Not a speck of fecal matter? Okay. Now take a single Tucks, place it across your three middle fingers, and wipe. The amount of sadness on the pad will make you faint.

The marketing problem for Tucks all these years is that they're sold as a hemorrhoidal aid instead of a profound mood enhancer. Tucks are like a romp through a field of daisies for your butt. Every year, I give Will Smith a case of Tucks for his birth day, since he's uncomfortable going down to his local Costco and picking up a pallet of them. Tucks changed Will Smith's life.

Tucks not only come in containers of 100 pads, which I keep in every bathroom in my house, they also come individually wrapped as "Tucks Take Alongs," which I carry in my wallet. They are like an instant portable bidet. And they can be used as a bribe. Although I was originally invited to the annual *Vanity Fair* Oscar party because of my fine work as a director, what gets me invited back is that I never fail to find editor Graydon Carter and discreetly place a Tucks in his hand. Tucks changed my life. Maybe they changed his life. They can change your life, too.

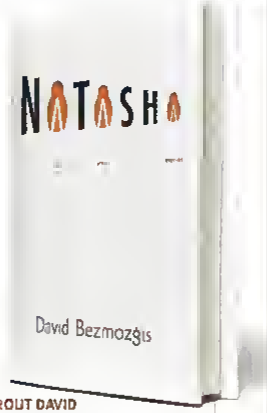
the rules RULE NO. 174: Leave the flavored lip balms to the preteens and prostitutes. RULE NO. 245: The popcorn purchased before the movie on a first date is always an extra large with butter. RULE NO. 292: Taking a yellow Hi-Liter to a *TV Guide* does not an academic make.

TOP: © JEROME FERRARO

Q+A: Kareem Abdul-Jabbar

DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN, RON CHERNOW Kareem Abdul-Jabbar? Yes, the bespectacled skyhooker has a new gig: historian. *Brothers in Arms* (Broadway Books, $25), cowritten with Anthony Walton, is an account of the U.S. Army's first African-American armored unit in World War II. The current Knicks scout fielded a few questions.
—DOUG CANTOR

ESQ: Are you more in your element working in the NBA than, say, writing a book?
KAJ: I think writing a book like this is what I would have done if I didn't have a basketball career. But I guess if you told the average person I wrote history books, they wouldn't believe it.
ESQ: Does it take a lot of intelligence to play pro basketball?
KAJ: At this point, it doesn't. I think earlier on, you had to have, as they say, often, a basketball IQ. But now the pro game is so predictable. The guys' knowledge of the game isn't refined.
ESQ: Have you ever thought about how you would fare as a soldier?
KAJ: Jeez, as a seven-foot-tall soldier? Someone my size is not good on the modern battlefield. But really, nobody knows that until you go out there and get shot at.



Big Important Book of the Month

THE FRIGHTENING THING ABOUT DAVID Bezmozgis's *Natasha and Other Stories* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, $18) isn't how good it is or how young Bezmozgis is—although it is scary good, and D-Bez is barely 30. No, what's truly terrifying is how the bandwagon is in full swing behind him.

Seven stories, 150 pages, and already he's published fiction in *Harper's* and *The New Yorker*. Not that there's anything wrong with that. But now comes his publisher trumpeting comparisons of Bezmozgis to Malamud, Brodkey, and Roth—and also, just for you young 'uns, Adam Haslett, Nathan Englander, and Jhumpa Lahiri. (The only brand names uninvoked—Proust and Dave Eggers—are apparently reserved for next year's genius.)

I pray the Bezman's tough enough not to melt under all this forced-air heat. He surely ought to be. The kid's a Latvian-born Jew who grew up in Toronto, and his stuff dances across the page without flash or fuss. The best stories of this bunch, the title job and "Minyan," are nothing short of brilliant, and there's not a weakling among them. To Bezmozgis's vast credit, not a line or note in the book rings false; the voice of his storyteller, young Mark Berman, is grounded by the streets of his family's neighborhood, and nothing comes off as smug or, worse still, wise. If you put a loaded rugelah to my graying head and forced me to come up with a comparison, I'd go with Joyce's *Dubliners*, but funny.

Yet forgive me, David, for I have seen the youthful first-person, eye-of-the-family-storm, smarter-than-the-struggling-but-beloved-parents narrator die a thousand deaths, often with nary a novel to show for it. So keep your chin down and your hands up, and take your time in there. You might be the one someday. We'll wait.
—SCOTT RAAB

3 for Your Shelf

THOMAS FRANK'S *What's the Matter with Kansas?* (Metropolitan Books, $24) offers a trenchant look at the political history of the increasingly conservative eponymous state. In *The Irresponsible Self* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, $24), James Wood uses his humor and perspicacity to glance over the history of literary comedy. And *Power, Terror, Peace, and War* (Knopf, $19), by Esquire contributor Walter Russell Mead, gives clarity to our understanding of America's current imperialistic power.

(BY MIKE D'ANGELO)

Saving Tom Hanks

Is the Academy's favorite son regressing to his *Splash*-era silliness? Man, we hope so.

ACTORS WHO ATTEND the Oscar ceremony, with few exceptions, are not having a good time. Of those nominated for an award, 80 percent will not win, which entails giving an impromptu performance as someone magnanimous enough to be happy for the no-talent ass kisser who did. Even by the churlish standards of Oscar night, though, Tom Hanks looked unusually pissed off at this year's soiree. Summoned to introduce a tribute to the late Bob Hope, he was accompanied to the podium by the jaunty, pompous strains of "Hail to the Chief"; the choice of music—an apparent non sequitur, since no Hanks character has ever inhabited the Oval Office—clearly galled him. "Snappy tune," he muttered darkly, discomfited to learn that the world now views him as presidential, which is to say powerful, dignified, and faintly dull.

Ripe for assassination, too, one might say. But I come not to bury Hanks but to raise him, Lazarus-like, from the tomb of worthiness in which he's been slowly suffocating for the last decade or so. Or, rather, to bear witness to the miraculous resuscitation of his comic persona, which began two Christmases ago with a goofy supporting role in Steven Spielberg's *Catch Me if You Can* and continues apace with his gloriously foppish turn as Professor Goldthwait Higginson Dorr, the courtly criminal mastermind at the center of *The Ladykillers*. If this doesn't strike you as an especially big deal, consider that this year's high school freshmen were still in diapers the last time Hanks starred in a flat-out comedy. An entire generation has grown up watching one of our most nimble, mischievous actors functioning at half speed, content to embody the fragile nobility of the American spirit or some such crap. It's as if Elvis Costello had spent most of the '90s cutting albums with the Brodsky Quartet and Burt Bacharach. (Wait a minute...)

The back-to-back Oscars in 1994 and 1995 didn't help. Hanks won the first for playing a gay AIDS victim in Jonathan Demme's *Philadelphia*, a phony melodrama that made musty "problem pictures" like 1947's *Gentleman's Agreement* (with Gregory Peck as a gentile who poses as a Jew) look hard-hitting. The character amounted to little more than a facile object lesson in tolerance directed at casual homophobes—queer dies for the straight guys, basically. Six months later, *Forrest Gump* sprinted into theaters; the character was admittedly less generic and more lively, but it was nonetheless a stunt performance, with Hanks begging for audience sympathy via a manufactured series of tics and grimaces.

His pandering validated with awards, acclaim, and boffo box office, Hanks ascended to the top of the Hollywood food chain, where he proceeded to carve out a new career as a capable everyman—Jimmy Stewart without the stammer and also without the latent nastiness uncovered by directors like Alfred Hitchcock and Anthony Mann. His résumé from 1995 to 2002 reads like a list of potential recipients of the Congressional Medal of Honor, from a resourceful astronaut in *Apollo 13* to a guy willing to tolerate Meg

ILLUSTRATION BY DANIEL ADEL

Ryan's calculated adorableness in *Sleepless in Seattle* and *You've Got Mail*. Even *Road to Perdition*, ostensibly intended to explore the actor's dark side, found Hanks playing the most sympathetic morally exculpable hit man in the history of motion pictures.

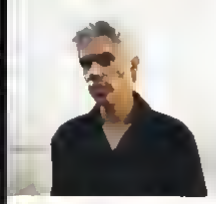
Hanks wasn't terrible in any of these films and was quite good in several. But you wouldn't exactly call his recent work electrifying. And yet an electric current thrums beneath his shaggy goofball exterior in most of the comedies he made back in the '80s, even when—as is often the case—the films have little else going for them. I can barely remember a single thing Hanks does in *Saving Private Ryan*—he saves Private Ryan, does he not?—but can still recall with absolute clarity his entrance in 1984's *Splash*, to the tune not of "Hail to the Chief" but of "Zip-a-Dee-Doo-Dah" ("Mr. Mango on my shoulder!"). His bitter, cynical rendition of "Singin' in the Rain" briefly transforms the execrable *Punchline* (1988) into a corrosive study of self-loathing. I even miss the patented Tom Hanks Bark of Exasperation, a mainstay from the era that now surfaces only when he performs the voice of Woody in the *Toy Story* films.

And then there's *Joe Versus the Volcano* (1990). Hanks's first pairing with Ryan—a notorious flop, now forgotten by all but a small coterie of die-hard fans, that happens to feature the best performances either actor has ever given. There's an alertness and vitality to Hanks's work here that makes most of what he's done since look mummified, which is all the more remarkable given that he's playing a depressed, suicidal character who's agreed to jump into an active volcano in exchange for enough cash to live out his last few weeks in style. If you want to see what Hanks is capable of when he's not burdened with iconic voice-of-the-people baggage, take a look at the scene in which the doctor (Robert Stack) tells Joe that he's suffering from a terminal "brain cloud." The sharp physical movement with which Hanks responds to this absurd diagnosis—sort of halfway between a double take and a shrug—is more alive than all of the virtuous platitudes that followed.

Some movie stars possess the kind of brooding, semi-opaque features that make them endlessly fascinating even in repose. Tom Hanks isn't one of them. His appeal lies in his everyman bluster: his live-wire petulance; like all natural comedians, he's at his best when his desires are being constantly thwarted. Still, he's more grounded than your Jim Carreys and Ben Stillers. If Hanks were a Corleone, he'd be Fredo: anxious, sardonic, prone to blurting things out and then immediately regretting the impulse, churning the air as if words could be borne back on a current. Imagine Fredo trying to fix up an old house and you have *The Money Pit*. Picture Fredo dating a mermaid and you have *Splash*. Stick Fredo in a dress and you have *Bosom Buddies*, the dopey sitcom that launched Hanks's career. So why are we watching this connoisseur of frustration perform one stolid Michael impersonation after another?

Lately, the manic irrepressibility has resurfaced, albeit modulated by middle age and atrophied by lack of exercise. *Catch Me if You Can* confirmed that Hanks should avoid New England accents (see also his snooty playboy in *Volunteers*), but at least he seemed to be having some fun with his Joe Friday knockoff, watching his laundry tumble dry in a hilariously doleful counterpoint to shots of Leonardo DiCaprio livin' large. And while the Coen brothers' overbearing gospel-tinged remake of *The Ladykillers* seems expressly designed to duplicate the success of their paean to old-time music—they might as well have called the thing *O Ancillary Revenues, Where Art Thou?*—Professor Dorr is the most engaging and memorable character Hanks has played in many years, in large part because Dorr is by far the most extroverted. He wraps his tongue around Dorr's orotund dialogue ("We shall require a Hefty bag") with an epicurean zest.

Admittedly, there are missteps. The eye-bulging gets out of control in a couple of scenes. Dorr's hysterical stutter-snort of a laugh, which Hanks hauls out at least half a dozen times, is a nice idea that doesn't quite work. But what a pleasure it is to see the guy cut loose a little at long last. In poker, the most common mistake made by those who aren't rank amateurs is playing in a style that's known as tight-weak: conservative, timid, hesitant to bet or raise without certain knowledge that you hold the best hand. As an actor, Hanks had for too long been playing tight-weak with his artistic cred, as if one false move might banish him forever to a world of *Bachelor Party* sequels and canine costars (though it should be acknowledged that no other actor would sound half as funny shouting, "Hooch!" at the top of his lungs). His next movie, Steven Spielberg's *The Terminal*, finds him playing an Eastern European immigrant trapped by global administrative chaos in a New York City airport—a premise so potentially cutesy that it could make even Robin Williams break out in hives. It might be an embarrassment. But at least it's a gamble.



Q+A: Jim Jarmusch

» ***Coffee and Cigarettes***, which first garnered attention at this year's Toronto Film Festival, is a collection of 11 shorts featuring director Jim Jarmusch's favorite actors meeting over America's two favorite vices. Cate Blanchett talks to her bratty, jealous cousin (also played by Blanchett). Tom Waits insults Iggy Pop in a seedy diner. Bill Murray serves java to RZA. The indie stalwart took a minute to talk about his latest project over a smoke and, well, not coffee. —DANIEL TORDAY

ESQ. Wait, you're drinking tea?

JJ: Yeah. I stopped drinking coffee in 1986. I used to drink like 12 cups a day, and then I'd be a nervous, depressed wreck. Now I drink only tea. And usually only one cup a day.

ESQ. You're still clearly a smoker.

JJ: I like coffee and cigarettes. Nicotine and caffeine are very strong narcotics, and we don't really give them respect for how strong they are. We even have little breaks in the day so we can get these drugs. But mostly the idea was making a movie about something that is the least dramatic part of your day.

ESQ. The scenes are all self-contained, but there are a couple of through lines, like when RZA repeats Tom Waits's earlier speech pretending to be a doctor.

JJ: Yeah. Tom pretending to be a doctor came out of the blue. It wasn't even in the script. We were shooting, and he started in like, "It's been a busy day, you know—four-car pileup. I had to perform a tracheotomy with a ball-point pen." I was riveted. And one of my favorite things is Iggy Pop's reaction, because it's real. He was like, "What're you, a doctor, man?"

ESQ. How did you decide to pair up Bill Murray with the Wu-Tang guys?

JJ: Man, I don't even know what the idea was. I called Bill Murray, and he said, "Well, how long will it take?" I said, "One day." "Okay, then just tell me where to be, what to wear, when to be there, and don't bother me again till then." He's very cagey. He drove Sofia Coppola nuts, he drove Wes Anderson nuts, and he loves them both. But if you can gamble and it works, you get Bill Murray.

ESQ. Do you take pride in your yellow cigarette fingers?

JJ: I don't, man. I'm smoking a lot less than I used to, but—are they yellow? A little bit, right? That's bad.

(Music) (BY ANDY LANGER)

Rock Radio Wakes Up

Once a haven for adventurous music by Nirvana and the Cure, alternative-rock radio is finally an alternative again

THE FCC MAY BE CLAMPING DOWN on dick jokes, but something else is funny about alternative-rock radio. The same format that delivered us Nirvana is suddenly listenable again. For most of us, when alternative radio was ruined by rap metal, we went looking for alternatives like the Internet and NPR. Now comes "alternative gold," a refreshing programming idea that proves yet again that what's bad for Fred Durst is good for us. Alternative gold assumes you love the Pixies and R.E.M. more than Staind and Puddle of Mudd. It also assumes what alternative radio used to—that you're passionate about new music. Los Angeles's Indie 103.1 is leading the charge with eclectic playlists that combine 1990s stalwarts with new acts like Bright Eyes and the Fire Theft—bands previously too adventurous for massive radio airplay. The result isn't just the reemergence of great rock radio but something even better—a much needed changing of the guard for alternative rock itself.

Already variations of the alternative-gold format have popped up in San Diego, Seattle, Boston, and Atlanta, forcing the hands of stodgy competitors to add songs from bands like Modest Mouse and the Yeah Yeah Yeahs. And the timing couldn't be better. This is a month with an embarrassment of debuts begging for wider audiences. Best among them is **the Secret Machines**. This New York trio's *Now Here Is Nowhere* features the shamelessly psychedelic "Nowhere Again," a song that'll send you dusting off *The Dark Side of the Moon*. Equally adventurous is "Sad and Lonely," featuring a swinging rhythm track that proves crunk ain't just for rappers anymore. Even more ready for alternative gold radio are **the Killers** and their debut *Hot Fuss*. Their single "Somebody Told Me" is a superb blaze of synthesizers and guitars that builds to the year's best one-liner: "Somebody told me you had a boyfriend who looked like a girlfriend / Had in February of last year." And then there's **the Honorary Title** and *Anything Else but the Truth*, which perfectly fuses pop, emo, and plenty of self-loathing. In fact, the single "Bridge & Tunnel" is so delightfully bitter that it makes the new Morrissey album sound like an hour of Tony Robbins.

These are all compelling debuts, start to finish. But what's so refreshing is that an alternative-rock radio format is willing to take chances on them. As it spreads (and it's well on its way), the ripple effect could be big. Record companies are slaves to the dial; if they see adventurous music getting played, they're going to offer up more adventurous music. Saying we need a Nirvana is one thing. Knowing that the machine could be in place to deliver one might just make radio worth more than the free concert tickets.

THE RESIDENT ROCK STAR

Monthly musings from our cultural advisor

ESQUIRE HAS GIVEN ME a third of a page to write what ever I please. Evidently it's bad form to sell it for ad space (sorry, Jim Ellis Ford and Mercury Dealers). So this month, I thought I'd share with you a new musician whose music's got me seriously worked up. But first, to gain your trust, a sampling of things I think I believe:

[illegible] I like them, but I don't see how they're in any way a manifestation of the blues.

[illegible] I could use their touch on my next record.

[illegible] Could use my touch on their next record.

[illegible] I've missed too many episodes to follow the plot.

[illegible] At last, hip-hop turns the hazards off and gets the flat tire fixed.

[illegible] Wants it so bad, he became it.

[illegible] B minus. Am I the only one who finds this record creepy to make out to?

[illegible] Good albums come with learning curves, and great albums give you something good to chew on while you're waiting for dinner to cook. I find myself chewing on another song off Nellie McKay's debut record, *Get Away from Me*, about once every two days. While Joss Stone is busy being mistaken for Miss Power of Suggestion 2004, this 19-year-old has quietly released one of the best albums of the year. *Get Away from Me* is a breakthrough album. It's also the kind of eclectic album that record companies don't traditionally have a clue what to do with. Based in jazz and borrowing heavily from musical theater, the environments are elaborately painted set pieces. Every melody—*every musical event*—is fully realized. In fact, there's more music in McKay's head than she knows what to do with. The next *Joshua Tree* it ain't, but 18 tracks on two discs ensure that if you can get past the fact that she *raps* without flinching on several songs, someday you'll get to hearing them all.

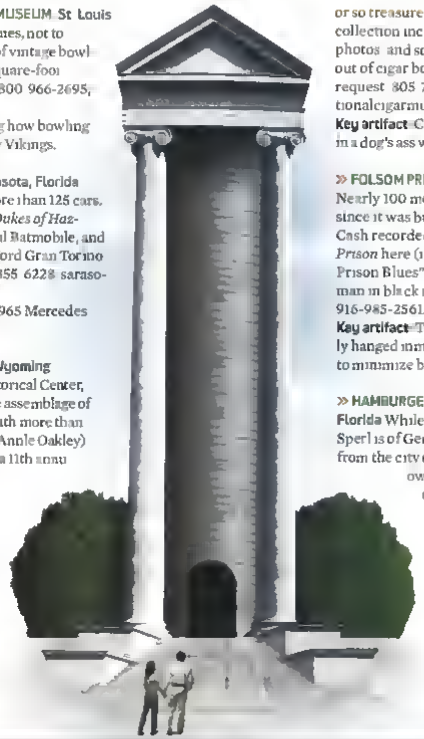
[illegible] Ways for lazy industry haters to get excited about the music again.

ILLUSTRATION BY BRIAN STAUFFER

Museums for Men

They may not be high culture, but at least they're ours

By James Oliver Cury



» INTERNATIONAL BOWLING MUSEUM St Louis Explore 5,000 years of pin games, not to mention a serious collection of vintage bowling trophies, in this 50 000 square-foot space. You can also roll a few 800 966-2695, bowlingmuseum com.
Key artifact Poster illustrating how bowling balls were used as weapons by Vikings.

» CLASSIC CAR MUSEUM Sarasota, Florida Four acres of land housing more than 125 cars. The *RoboCop* patrol car, *The Dukes of Hazzard's* General Lee, the original Batmobile, and the original *Starsky & Hutch* Ford Gran Torino have all rotated through 941 355 6228 sarasotacarmuseum org.
Key artifacts John Lennon's 1965 Mercedes 230 SL and Sir Paul s Mini

» FIREARMS MUSEUM Cody Wyoming Located in the Buffalo Bill Historical Center, this is the most comprehensive assemblage of American guns in the world, with more than 6,000 (including ones used by Annie Oakley) From August 12 to 14 join in the 11th annual Buffalo Bill Invitational Shootout 307-587-4771, www codyfirearms-museum com/firearms
Key artifact Hand-cranked, ten-barrel Gatling gun from 1890 that can spit out 25 rounds in one second

» NATIONAL CIGAR MUSEUM central California Tony Hyman began collecting cigar related paraphernalia in 1952 and now shares his 15,000 or so treasures by appointment only His collection includes hundreds of boxes labels, photos and some musical instruments made out of cigar boxes Address released upon request 805 773-6777, cigarnexus com/nationalcigarmuseum
Key artifact Cast-iron lighter that heats a coil in a dog's ass when the testicle trigger is pulled

» FOLSOM PRISON MUSEUM Folsom, California Nearly 100 men have been strung up here since it was built in 1880 And yes Johnny Cash recorded his classic album *At Folsom Prison* here (including the song "Folsom Prison Blues") in January 1968, although the man in black never really did hard time 916-985-2561.
Key artifact Two thick hemp ropes that actually hanged inmates, each rope was prestretched to minimize bounce

» HAMBURGER MUSEUM Daytona Beach Florida While collector and curator Harry Sperl is of German descent he is (sadly) not from the city of Hamburg Nonetheless, he owns the world's largest collection of hamburger related items, including banks biscuit jars clocks hats, magnets, music boxes, salt and pepper shakers, stuffed toys towels and plenty of Hamburglar action figures The museum is located in his house www hamburgerharry com
Key artifacts. The hamburger waterbed and the hamburger motorcycle

The Best Hotel for Sex

KEITH ROGAL KNOWS what couples like in a hotel room, and it's not just high-speed Internet access. His Carneros Inn—the first new resort in California's Napa Valley in 20 years—is well equipped for more physical pursuits The upscale cottages have:

Padded headboards so no one gets a concussion. An oversized rain showerhead with its pipes braced firmly to the wall—all the better to hang on to. Hardy soundproofing. Le Corbusier chaise longues that "support recreation and relaxation in a variety of positions." An outdoor shower—big enough for two—that has glorious views of the vineyards.

Rates from $375 per night 707-299-4900 carnerosinn com. —TARA WEINGARTEN

ILLUSTRATION BY WILLIAM BLAKE

(The Digital Man) (BY BARRY SONNENFELD)

Old Loves, New Leicas

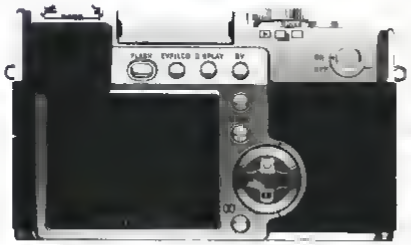
GROWING UP, I WANTED TO BE a still photographer. I wanted to be Elliott Erwitt, Robert Frank, Lee Friedlander or Garry Winogrand. In high school, I built a darkroom in my bedroom in New York City that forced me to sleep in the one-foot space above it. Eventually I decided that being a photographer meant spending too much time alone; I needed a job in which I could order a lot of people around. I became a film director.

During the cramped years of sleeping in a space smaller than a submarine bunk, I carried around the symbol of famous street photographers—a used Leica M2, with a 35mm summicron f/2 lens, loaded with Tri-X film. I was never without it. I was skinny and gawky, but I was cool. Thirty years later, I am now testing the latest generation digital camera from Leica, the fixed-lens, 5-megapixel **Digilux 2**. I'm cool again!

The camera looks like a blown-up Leica designed for a display case at some photo expo. It's kind of huge, and I'm not sure why—but it's light. The lens is super sharp and has a very useful zoom range—the 35mm equivalent of a 28mm to 90mm zoom. Happily you zoom the lens by turning its barrel, not by pushing some motorized button. The LCD display is big and bright, and the camera also has a digital viewfinder. Instead of looking through a piece of glass, you see a small electronic screen, which gives you a real sense that what you see is what you get. The flash is cool too. If you press the flash button once, the flash pops out at a 60 degree angle to create a softer, less harsh overall illumination. Press it a second time and the unit becomes a traditional flash.

There are some stupid things about this camera as well. The knurled ring on the top that lets you change the settings has no locking mechanism, so I shot a night's worth of photos at 1/1,000th of a second by accident. Another problem I had was the metering system, which tried to make my night photos look like daytime. When you try to compensate for this, need to flatten everything out by changing the EV (light sensitivity) settings so the shot will be darker, the actual input is not reflected on the display screen. Only in review mode can you see if what you did actually worked.

Here's the bottom line: If you're single and you're thinking about getting a puppy to meet girls, but you don't want to make the commitment to a dog, carry around this camera instead. You'll get noticed. I have to admit it grew on me, and if I owned it instead of just testing it, I would have figured out enough ways to fool it into taking photos the way I want them taken. $1,850, leicacamerausa.com.



M A H B

What's in Your Netflix Queue?

Zooey Deschanel, actress

1] *The 400 Blows* 2] *This Is Spinal Tap* 3] *Roman Holiday* 4] *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg* 5] *The Wizard of Oz* 6] *Rushmore* 7] *Being There* 8] *The Third Man* 9] *Singin' in the Rain* 10] *Gigi*

ILLUSTRATION BY JOHN HERSEY

(Answer Fella)

Propecia, Cell Phones, Wine Etiquette & Monkey-Human Hybrids

ESQUIRE'S ANSWER FELLA believes that there are no stupid questions, just stupid people who don't ask questions, fearing they'll look stupid. So ask Answer Fella anything. If he doesn't know the answer, he'll find out who does, or who has a guess that sounds right.

[illegible]

First, Answer Fella tips his hat to any man willing to sacrifice sexual pleasure for the sake of his hairline. At least his priorities are straight—unlike yours. Your emasculating, self-serving "concern" about his sexual self-image—as if men actually worry about penis size!—and your disgusting obsession with his withering cock make AF feel like giving you a long, firm talking-to. And a nice, slow massage.

But assuming you still want to lay this needle-dicked lout, you ought to peruse the product literature and—if you can pry the mirror and comb out of his hands for a minute—explain it to him. The FDA-approved Propecia package insert lists the following possible side effects: difficulty in achieving an erection, lessened sexual desire, and a decrease in the volume of his semen. So, though his penis may not technically be shrinking, his boners may be losing steam, leaving you with a sense of emptiness and yearning. You may want to urge the dolt to ask his doctor to test his hormone levels, or you may want to put him, his precious scalp, and his waning wand behind you. AF understands, baby. Truly he does.

[illegible]

Listen up, Jasper. If there's one eternal verity in the realm of bidness, it's this: Nobody rides for free. Whether the song is instrumentally re-created by digital beeps (known as a polyphonic ring tone) or snipped from an actual recording (called a music ring tone), someone's getting paid for the rights to the song.

In the first case—the re-created ring tone—companies pay for performance and publishing rights, and the songwriter gets a chunk of change. With the music ring tones, the original recording artist also gets royalties.

According to Fabrice Grinda, cofounder and CEO of Zingy, America's largest mobile media company, "Polyphonic ring tones represent 90 percent of the market right now, but music tones should take over in the coming few years"—great news for anyone regularly riding mass transit.

[illegible]

AF proudly steps aside for a boss expert—Esquire contributing editor, gobo buddy, and the man who puts the gleam in that *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* television circus, Ted Allen.

"A bottle of wine brought to a dinner party is a *gift* for the host, as would be, say, a geranium, a negligee, or a Rolex, and no one should presume that said host intends to share it that very night. Unless prearranged between gifter and giftee—for example, you tell your host, 'Bob, I've got a '98 Opus One that would rock severely with that stinky cheese you're planning to serve,' and Bob expresses great enthusiasm at the prospect—the wines presented and poured shall be left entirely to Bob. Of course, if Bob *elects* to pop your cork, that's his prerogative." Heh, heh. Ted said "pop your cork."

[illegible]

The short answer is (gasp!) probably—if by "monkey pals" you mean chimpanzees and by "mate" you refer to the production of offspring via artificial insemination, rather than the customary route of courtship and seduction, followed by impregnation, discord, despair, and Propecia.

Matt Powell, a molecular geneticist at the University of Idaho, whose doctoral dissertation compared ape and human DNA, says chimps are "by far the closest relatives genetically to humans. The scientific community makes a distinction by placing them in a different genus, when by most accounts, we should be in the same genus.

"*Could* artificial insemination be done? Yes. Would the outcome be viable? Lots of people have speculated on that. The discussions range from 'No—there are too many differences for a putative human hybrid to tolerate.' to 'Oh, yeah, and the hybrid would probably show heterosis.' Heterosis is when a hybrid shows improvement over either parental type—often dramatic improvement."

Meaning, if you vote with the "Oh, yeah/dramatic improvement" folks, the product of mating Robin Williams and a chimpanzee just might turn out to be Carrot Top with a shorter tail and a flaming-red ass. Or, on the downside, Colin Quinn.

[illegible] question? Send it to Answer Fella@esquire.com/talk.

ILLUSTRATION BY MARK MATCHO

the Esquire Guide

THE SEVEN-FOLD TIE It's the gold standard of ties—one large piece of silk folded into itself and then folded again and again until what is left is the sturdiest, most sumptuous piece of neckwear in existence. It needs no inner lining, which means that you won't find a frayed piece of polyester ruining the hand-sewn silk you paid so dearly for. And yes, you will pay dearly for the seven-fold tie, often twice the amount you'd normally spend. But it will last longer than you will, because it has the kind of quality that can be passed down to your progeny—the same as that old Rolex that was passed down to you. So go ahead. Invest. Seven-fold silk tie ($195) by Kiton

PHOTOGRAPH BY N. GEL COX

the Esquire Guide

THE WIDTH THAT MATTERS

Sound familiar? The width of your tie is just as important as the pattern, or lack thereof, on its silk. The wider the tie, the bolder you'll look, with the widest of them all giving you the air of an Italian plutocrat enjoying a lazy midweek lunch. Somewhere in the middle is the more, well, middle-of-the-road tie. A safer choice, it's versatile enough to wear with a business suit but still capable of adding a little uptown when you need it. And yes, the skinny tie might make you look like a member of the Strokes, but remember that for you to pull it off successfully, it doesn't hurt to be a member of the band.

Silk ties: Estate by Robert Talbott ($145); Gucci ($125); Tino Cosma ($95); Trend Corneliani ($95); Tommy Hilfiger ($40); Dolce & Gabbana ($105)

PHOTOGRAPH BY NIGEL COX

the Esquire Guide

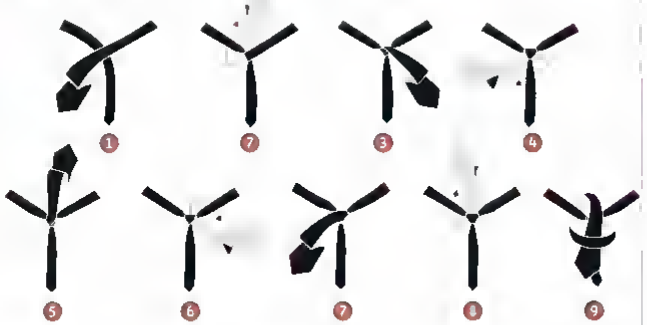
« Four-in-Hand: This is the move your dad taught you. Five quick motions and you're done. An easy pinch in the middle gives you a centered dimple. And the skinny knot works well with a button-down.

Cotton shirt ($225) Best of Class by Robert Talbott; silk tie ($155) by Brioni

Half Windsor: » Adding a couple of extra moves widens the knot, which works with most collars. It should be wide enough to fill the center space of your collar.

Cotton shirt ($375) by Luigi Borrelli; silk tie ($115) by Hickey Freeman

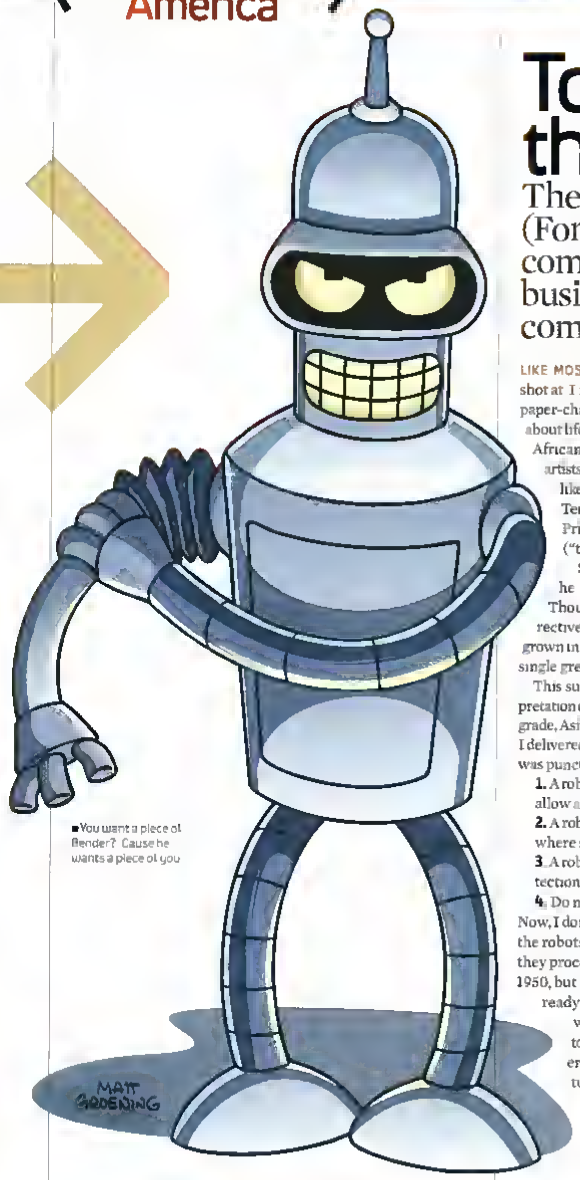
« Windsor: Named for the Duke of Windsor, perfected by Frank Sinatra, this is the grand-daddy of knots. It takes a little work, yes, but the results will leave others asking how you pulled it off. And with a knot this fat, only a wide, spread collar will do.



Cotton shirt ($165) by Thomas Pink; silk tie ($152) by Luigi Borrelli.

FOR STORE INFORMATION, SEE PAGE 158

ILLUSTRATIONS BY BRUNO



■ You want a piece of Bender? Cause he wants a piece of you

Toast in the Machine

The robots are coming! (For real.) The robots are coming! (And they mean business.) The robots are coming! (Are you ready?)

LIKE MOST MIDDLE-CLASS white people who will never be shot at, I'm fascinated by the hyperdesperate, darkly realistic, paper-chasing world of postmodern hip-hop. I've learned a lot about life from watching MTV Jams; my understanding of the African-American experience comes from street-hardened artists who have looked into the mouth of the lion and scoffed like soldiers. These are people like Sean Carter ("Jay-Z"), Terius Gray ("Juvenile"), Nasir Jones ("Nas"), and Leshe Pridgen ("Freeway"). And, to a lesser extent, Will Smith ("the Fresh Prince of Bel-Air").

Smith is an intriguing figure, sort of. Unlike his peers, he has evolved with the culture that spawned him. Though once merely peeved by his mother's fashion directives (1988's "Parents Just Don't Understand"), he has grown into a mature artist who's willing to confront America's single greatest threat: killer robots.

This summer Smith will star in *I, Robot*, a cinematic interpretation of nine stories by Isaac Asimov. When I was in the sixth grade, Asimov struck me as a profoundly compelling figure, and I delivered a stirring oral book report on *I, Robot*. The collection was punctuated by Asimov's now famous "Laws of Robotics":

1. A robot may not injure a human being or, through inaction, allow a human being to come to harm.
2. A robot must obey orders given it by human beings, except where such orders would conflict with the First Law.
3. A robot must protect its own existence as long as such protection does not conflict with the First or Second Law.
4. Do not talk about Fight Club.

Now, I don't think I'm giving anything away by telling you that the robots in *I, Robot* find a loophole in those principles, and they proceed to slowly fuck us over. *I, Robot* was published in 1950, but writers (or at least muttonchopped Isaac) were already terrified about mankind's bellicose relationship with technology. This is a relationship we continue to fear. If we have learned only one thing from film, literature, and rock music, it is this: Humans will eventually go to war against the machines. There is no way to avoid this. But you know what? If we somehow manage to lose this showdown, we really have no excuse. Because I can't imagine any war we've spent more time worrying about.

The *Terminator* trilogy is about a war against the machines; so is the *Matrix* trilogy. So is *Maximum Overdrive*, although that movie also implied that robots enjoy the music of AC/DC. I don't think the Radiohead album *OK Computer* is specifically about computers trying to kill us, but it certainly suggests that computers are not "okay." *2001: A Space Odyssey* employs elements of robot hysteria, as do the plotlines of roughly 2,001 video games. I suspect *Blade Runner* might have touched on this topic, but I honestly can't remember (I was too busy pretending it didn't suck.) There is even a Deutsch electronica band called Lights of Euphoria, its supposed masterpiece is an album titled *Krieg Gegen die Maschinen*, which literally translates as "War Against the Machines." This means that even European techno fans are aware of this phenomenon, and those idiots generally aren't aware of *anything* (except who in the room might have ketamine).

I'm not sure how we all became convinced that machines intend to dominate us. As I type this very column, I can see my toaster, and I'll be honest: I'm not nervous. As far as I can tell, it poses no threat. My relationship with my toaster is delicious but completely one-sided. If I can be considered the Michael Jordan of My Apartment (and I think I can), my toaster is LaBradford Smith. I'm never concerned that my toaster will find a way to poison me, or that it will foster a false sense of security before electrocuting me in the shower, or that it will align itself politically with my microwave. I even played "Dirty Deeds Done Dirt Cheap" in my kitchen just to see if my toaster would become self-aware and go for my jugular. Its reaction was negligible. Machines have no grit.

It appears we've spent half a century preparing for a war against a potential foe who—thus far—has been nothing but civil to us. It's almost as if we've made a bunch of movies that warn about a coming conflict with the Netherlands. In fact, there isn't even any evidence that robots could kick our ass *if they wanted to*. In March, a shadowy military organization called DARPA (the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency) challenged engineers to build a driverless, autonomous vehicle that could traverse a 142-mile course in the Mojave Desert; the contest's winner was promised a cash prize of $1 million. And you know who won? Nobody. Nobody's robot SUV could make it farther than 74 miles. Even with the aid of GPS, robots are completely moronic. Why do we think they'll be able to construct a matrix if they can't even drive to Vegas?

I suspect all these dystopic man-versus-machine scenarios are grounded in the fact that technology *is* legitimately alienating. The rise of computers (and robots, and iPods, and nanomachines that hope to turn the world into sentient "gray goo") has certainly made life easier, but it's also accelerated depression. Case in point: If this were 1904, you would not be reading this magazine; you would be chopping wood or churning butter or watching one of your thirteen children die from crib death. Your life would be horrible, but it would have purpose. It would have clarity. Machines allow humans the privilege of existential anxiety. Machines provide us with the extra time to worry about the status of our careers, and/or the context of our sexual relationships, and/or what it means to be alive. Unconsciously, we hate technology. We hate the way it replaces visceral experience with self-absorption. And the only way we can reconcile that hatred is by pretending machines hate us, too.

It is human nature to personify anything we don't understand: God, animals, hurricanes, mountain ranges, jet skis, strippers, et cetera. We deal with inanimate objects by assigning them the human qualities we assume they would have if they were exactly like us. Consequently, we think of machines as our slaves, and we like to pretend that these mechanized slaves will eventually attempt a hostile takeover.

The truth, of course, is that *we* are the slaves, the machines became our masters through a bloodless coup that began during the industrial revolution. (In fact, this is kind of what *I, Robot* is about, although I assume the Will Smith version will not make that clear.) By now, I think many Americans are aware of that reality. I think any smarter-than-average person already concedes that a) we've lost control of technology and b) there's nothing we can do about it.

But that's defeatist. Openly embracing that reality would make the process of living even darker than it already is; we'd all move to rural Montana and become Unabombers. We need to remain optimistic. And how do we do that? By preparing ourselves for a futuristic war against intelligent, man-hating cyborgs. As long as we dream of a war that has not yet happened, we are able to believe it's a war we have not yet lost.

But hey—maybe I'm wrong about all this. Perhaps we humans are still in command, and perhaps there really will be a conventional robot war in the not-so-distant future. If so, let's roll. I'm ready. My toaster will never be the boss of me. Get ready to make me some Pop-Tarts, bitch. ESQ

Q+A: K. Eric Drexler, the father of nanotechnology

» ARE YOU LIKE ME? Do you sometimes worry that tiny machines will consume the earth in a sinister attempt to destroy our society? If so, the scenario you fear hinges on the idea of "gray goo," a theory proposed by a futurist named K. Eric Drexler. I called Drexler at his desk in Los Altos, California, to figure out how anxious I need to be. —C. K.

ESQ. What is gray goo?

KED (*sighs*) Gray goo is the hypothetical danger that would arise if somebody built a machine that could create copies of itself using naturally occurring materials and unleashed it on society. Now, this is not easy. Someone would have to solve a very complicated engineering problem, build the machine, and then turn it loose. It would then—theoretically—turn everything in the world into a mass of nanomachines.

ESQ. Why would anyone do this?

KED. Beats me.

ESQ. I get the impression that this is something I don't need to worry about.

KED. This is the danger of alliteration. For example, I think half of the people who talk about the "digital divide" do so because it has an alliterative name; if you called it the "gap in the availability of computing," no one would care. People like the term "gray goo" because it has two g's. There's nothing gray or gooey about it. And this is all my fault, really.

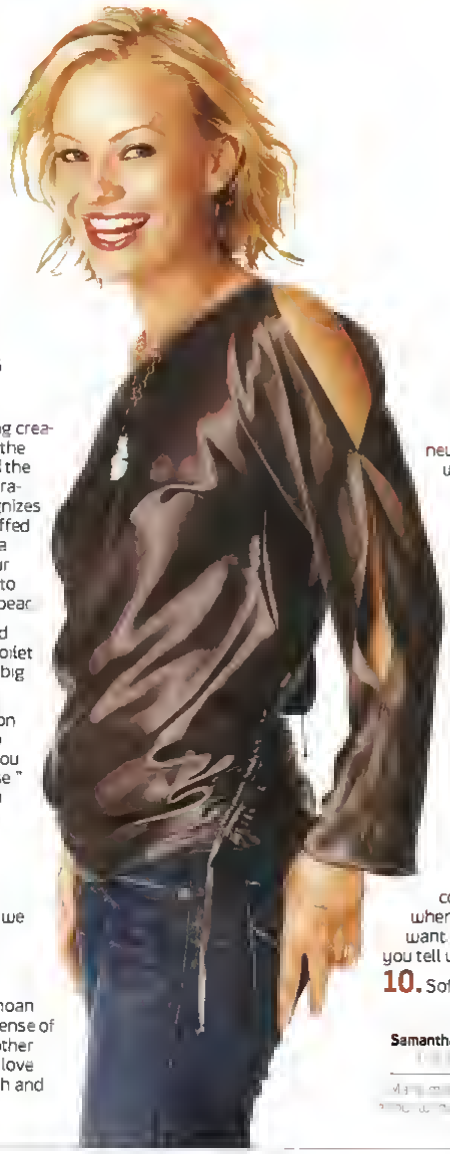
ESQ. Do you regret creating the term "gray goo"?

KED. It is pretty silly.

ILLUSTRATION BY STEVEN L. CLOUD

Ten Things You Don't Know About Women

By Samantha Mathis



1. We willingly admit to being creatures of at least two minds—the rational, intellectual side and the female side. And though our rational, intellectual side recognizes that buying us some silly stuffed animal for Valentine's Day is a complete waste of money, our female side really needs you to go out and buy us the teddy bear.

2. Though it irks us to no end when someone pees on the toilet seat, you are not, in fact, the big offender. Other women are.

3. Regarding clothing: Fashion designer Issey Miyake says to women, "Pleats, please." To you we say, "Flat front only, please." And while you're at it, jettison tight or stonewashed jeans.

4. Asking for directions is a really big turn-on.

5. You are not the only ones who enjoy a lap dance. So do we. And yes, we'll let you watch, because we'll probably be watching you, too.

6. While we may bitch and moan about the time, pain, and expense of waxing, manicures, and our other various beauty regimens, we love showing up for you all smooth and soft, with pretty red toes.

7. That said, here's a news flash: The Brazilian wax is dead. Seventies bush is back. Sorry if this throws off your internal navigation system, but we know you'll find your way eventually.

8. Please don't be thrown by the fact we have careers and homes and are independent women. We still need you very much for your love, for your humor, for the way you look at things differently, and for your loving arms around us.

9. Like the fortune cookie says: We love it when you ask us what we want. We also love it when you tell us what to do. In bed.

10. Soft and slow is always the way to go.

Samantha Mathis stars in *Salem's* [illegible] this month on TNT.

[illegible] you don't know [illegible] about women.

PHOTOGRAPH BY JEFF L. PSKY

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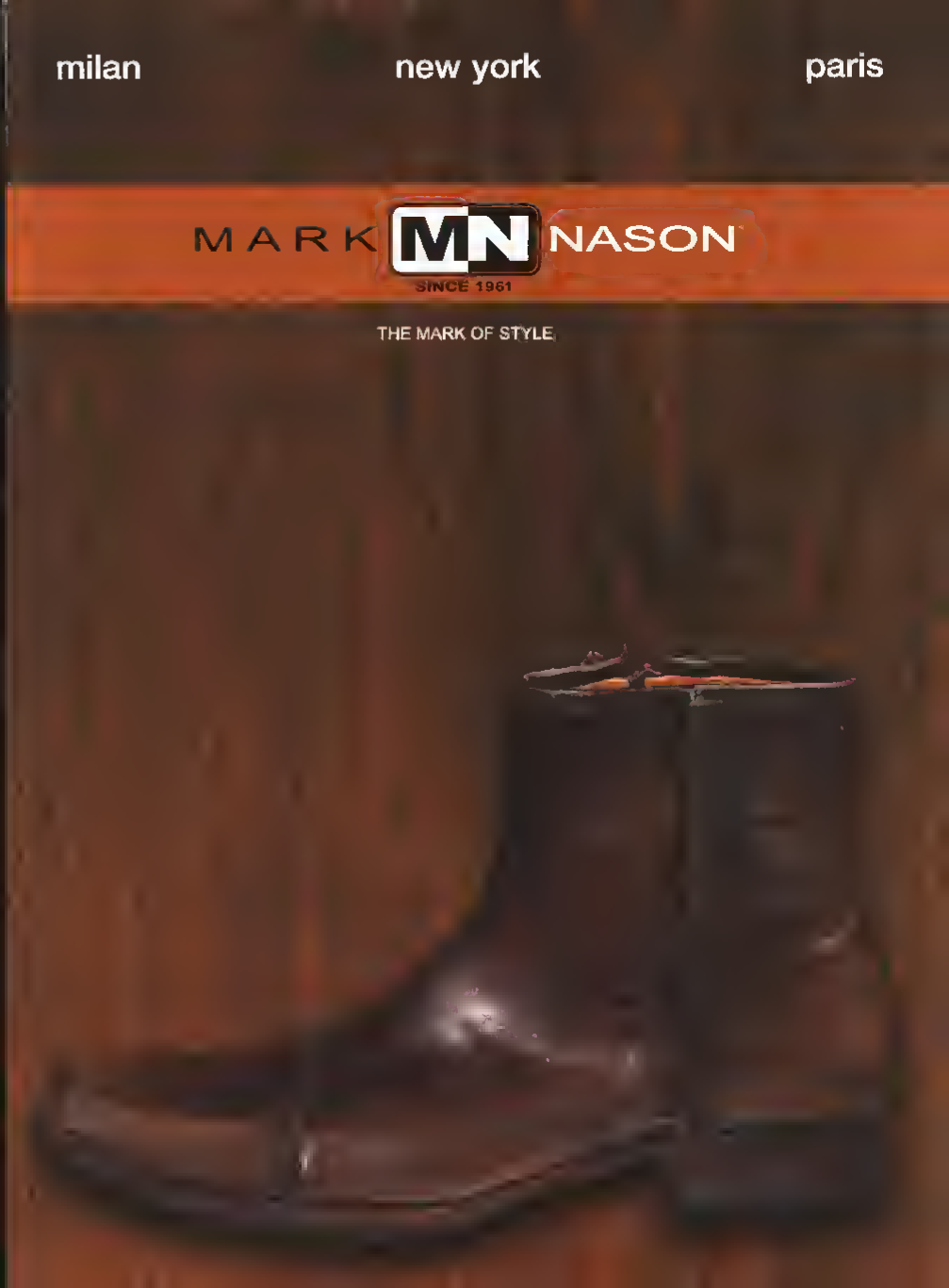


The Outsider

The most famous American athlete not playing in America is ungainly, unorthodox, and takes no medication for his Tourette's. He may also become the best goalkeeper in the world. BY CHRIS JONES

HE KNOWS HE'S WEAKEST just before he puts out the lights. So the night before a big game—and here in Manchester, they're all big games—Tim Howard checks into some posh hotel and reads himself into a dreamless sleep, alone. Now it's *To Kill a Mockingbird* that's filling the last empty spaces of his mind. Next, it will be *My Prison Without Bars*, the Pete Rose semi-apology. Anyway, he reads himself to sleep, and then he wakes up to a big English breakfast and the hopes in the hearts of millions.

THERE ARE OTHER TEAMS that call themselves United—Sheffield United, West Ham United, Newcastle United—but there's only one that doesn't need the explanation of place next to it, or that's met by streetloads of screaming girls in Japan, or that has 186 schoolboy teams in Nigeria named after it. There's only one that plays in Old Trafford, in the biggest soccer stadium in England, under banners hanging above the home goal that announce ONE LOVE, and then, a little farther to the right, THE RELIGION.

Around the same time that Tim Howard finishes up his breakfast and boards the bus that will take him and his teammates to Valhalla—this morning, to face rival Leeds—United's faithful begin pouring out of their terrace houses and marching toward the train sheds at Piccadilly, wrapped in their team's red scarves and jerseys, singing, warming up their lungs in advance of the afternoon. They file onto the trains, steaming past the apartment blocks and barge-clogged canals, and off them again, in the shadow of the stadium and a phalanx of police. There are Sharps making sure their boots are polished, punks with their Mohawks dyed scarlet, gangs of factory boys pushing back cans of Stella. They jam around the doors, waiting for their cathedral to open.

Howard is somewhere underneath it all, sunk into a chair, watching video of the household names he's never heard of and now never bothers to remember.

An invisible signal is given, and the huge, quiet emptiness makes way for 67,744 fans, funneling through clicking turnstiles like mercury down a drain, their choruses drifting up to the grandstand roofs and washing out over the pitch. The fans all have seats, but everybody stands, hopping up and down in anticipation of ninety minutes of freedom—from the drudgery of the rest of the week, the winter, and the rain. In this, they are together. They belong.

Howard dresses in his warm-up gear and

■ Howard celebrates a goal after a save against [illegible] just hours after leaving New [illegible] and signing with Manchester

walks out onto the pitch flooded up to his eyes in the chaos He's tall (six feet three), but everything else about him is trimmed down, his hair is shaved close to the bone, and his manicured beard is a smudge, and his long shorts and socks make his legs look shrunken somehow He stretches out his hamstrings without them getting any longer, begins collecting soft lobs, works out his lean shoulders, gathers a couple of crosses. He's part of everything else that s going on, but he's the only one not wearing red

The fans continue to sing For these few beautiful times in their lives, everything is promise On Saturday afternoons, Manchester isn't struggling to overcome its reputation for pea-soup fog, gunshot murders, or the piss-stink of Strangeways prison. It's the middle of a boundless universe

Howard retreats from it and returns to it, now in his game kit, a shade of gray He stands off by himself, alone in his box drawn in chalk. He spits into his gloves crosses himself, and claps

The whistle blows. Old Trafford lights up.

Howard sees only the white shirts of Leeds, and their patterns of attack, and the ball "It s the goalkeeper in me, I guess," he says More truthfully, it s the outsider in him It's the twenty-five year old biracial Yank from cold-water-flat New Jersey with a mild case of Tourette's in him That s what's made him able to walk into this new life of his and why, despite the weight of the worlds put on top of him he's been able to blow himself up bigger than anyone else on the field.

THE WHOLE CRAZY thing began with a chipped phone call last January from Tony Coton, United's goalkeeping coach. (Actually it began with Howard being a hyperactive kid in North Brunswick, New Jersey, and his single mother, Esther looking for ways to run off his energy, and maybe with both of them looking to find relief from his Tourette's, to escape to places where his tics didn't matter so long as he stopped the ball) "We re going to be watching you," Coton said And though Howard never knew when they were they watched him plenty, judging him and his work for the New York New Jersey MetroStars of Major League Soccer, the team and the B league that had signed him out of high school in 1998 for $24 000 He was brave and agile, and although his style was unorthodox—ugly to higher minds—he got in front of shots. He didn t wait for the game to come to him, he took it cutting off angles and chances with a sort of ungainly abandon Unlike European 'keepers, he wasn't flamboyant or artful, and he never tried to make his saves look any better than they were He just made the net seem small, and that was all that mattered

What United likes It buys, and it bought Tim Howard and reportedly gave him $3 million to boot. (UNITED WANT AMERICAN WITH BRAIN DISORDER read a headline in *The Guardian*) Now the Reds were carrying four top drawer goalkeepers, including Fabien Barthez, the charismatic, bald-headed, and—sure enough—flamboyant Frenchman and 1998 World Cup winner As it happens, Barthez and the rest of the team were gearing up for an American tour last summer when Howard was signed trying to build up their brand in the one corner of the world where it remains smaller than Jesus. (They'll be stateside again this summer, beginning a tour against other top European teams in late July) Howard

He doesn't [illegible] dicat[illegible] form[illegible] To [illegible] rather [illegible] himself [illegible] nothing [illegible] He [illegible] ugly. And he [illegible] ts [illegible]

joined them for training in Portland Oregon, ready to be the fourth of four Then in one of those strange fumbles of fate that might make you wonder how things really work, he was given the start in a game against Juventus at Giants Stadium in New Jersey, where he'd just finished saying goodbye to his teammates and friends

It was risk all round United was unseating a legend with this twenty-five-year-old biracial Yank from cold-water-flat New Jersey with a mild case of Tourette's Howard was getting his one best shot at making his own hopes come true, while those few people he'd ever shared them with watched from the stands

"So much pressure," he says, remembering his former self, in between involuntary coughs and sniffs and blinks With one foot in his new world and one foot in the old he was bridging oceans in a single night. "I knew what I could do " he says. "I just had to do it.

He did it well enough for Fabien Barthez never to play for United again

TIM HOWARD TAKES a seat in an otherwise empty corner of a coffee-and-wine joint called Cafe Rouge, which he likes coming to because no one else does He throws his peacoat on the bench beside him, tugs at his cap, low over his eyes, and then at his white T-shirt, unconsciously pulling his sleeves over his tattoos. His skin is heavy with ink There is Superman s logo and his mother s name, dragons and a cross Chinese characters that represent God, family faith health, and happiness all of which he holds close, and in something like that order

He's always liked tattoos, ever since he was a kid, one more way to build distance between himself and everybody else He cultivates it here, too, speaking just above a whisper, his dark eyes never quite meeting anyone else's. He orders a double espresso which he lets grow cold before finally asking the waitress if he could trouble her for some sugar

Eight months ago, when he first came to England with his new wife, Laura and his stacks of books he asked the same waitress for directions to Old Trafford She asked him if he was part of a tour, taking in the sights "Um, well " he said "I'm the new goalkeeper I guess " It sounded almost as funny to him as it did to everybody else. Now things have changed

He and Laura both felt that they shouldn't live together until they were married, but they knew that they d have only each other over here, so they canceled their fall wedding plans and got hitched in haste in Central Park, with a grand total of ten people in attendance, two days before they made the mad summer dash for Manchester Next, they wanted to make a sanctuary for themselves, so they found a renovated Victorian house in the Cheshire countryside, far outside the black-lunged city and called it home They learned how to drive on the left hand side of the road They got a taste for fish and chips served in

newspapers. But they missed other things—family and friends, the Knicks, the sun. So they brought their loved ones over in a constant, fortifying stream, picked up satellite TV and ordered a subscription to *USA Today*. A few weeks ago, they got a dog named Clayton to fill whatever void remained. And most important, Howard learned how to read himself to sleep.

He remembers his time with the MetroStars when he played well for a decent team in the peace of relative obscurity, and how he was there, back then—not high-strung, exactly, but not the picture of serenity he's become. In New Jersey, he was playing within shouting distance of his childhood home, a one-bedroom apartment in which his mother somehow made room for him, herself and his older brother. He knew the people who were coming out to see him play, and the hopes in *their* hearts he couldn't ignore. Six years on, Howard had climbed as far inside something as he ever had in his life. In that, there was a comfort, but there was also a danger of his fading away; in becoming part of something larger, he'd lost something smaller.

He's found it again. In addition to his reflexes, which gave him shutouts in half of his first twenty-eight games and put United, yet again, in the thick of things at the top of the table, Howard has just finished honing his remarkable sense of self. He's made himself unshakable, even in these, the unlikeliest surroundings, by never trying to belong.

Part of it stems from naïveté—"I don't know the history," he says of Manchester and the Reds. "If I was walking onto the court at Madison Square Garden, then I'd be nervous." But the bigger part of it comes from some inner space that he's carefully tended. The way some kids practice their walk in front of a mirror just to get the lope right, he's worked at building a more spiritual swagger, a mix of confidence and nonchalance that he keeps stopped up like a potion until the whistle blows. It has meant that even on a team called United, Howard stands apart.

He doesn't take medication for his Tourette's, putting up with its staccato rhythms and the stares rather than risk turning himself into something he's not. He still plays ugly. His best friends in England are Americans on rival teams, Blackburn's Brad Friedel and Tottenham's Kasey Keller. And he's resisted calling the sport he plays—the sport that, in New Jersey at least, gets a cold shoulder from just about everybody else—"football" the way he's supposed to. For him, it's soccer. That's all there is to it.

Actually, there's one more thing. What's there—or, really, what isn't there—is an absence of fear.

"For me, I always look at the worst-case scenario: What is it that I'm most afraid of? Because if you feel pressure, if you take it in, to heart, that means you're afraid of something. So, for me, the worst thing that can happen, on the field, at least, is losing. But then when you're in the middle of a losing streak"—like the one late in the season that earned him an unaccustomed rest on the bench—"it's kind of funny, you just feel like you can get out of it. You're in the middle of the thing you're most afraid of, and yet you know you can beat it. And if that's as bad as it gets, if that's the worst thing that can happen, you realize that there's nothing really to worry about."

He takes a sip and smiles. "The fear falls away," he says, and you can see that the goalkeeper in him means it.

WHAT HE FEARS least of all are the big games—and here in Manchester, they're all big games. Maybe his nervous center is too busy to pay mind to even the tiniest spark of game-time panic. Maybe each cough and sniff and blink does the same job as each of the books piled on his nightstand, filling in the time that the rest of us might spend twisting ourselves into knots, paralyzed by our imaginations.

Which is why, this afternoon, when Leeds drives up the field, plotting their possession like chess, Howard can come out to meet them, elbows up. It's why he doesn't need to hide in the shadow of ONE LOVE and THE RELIGION, and why, when he charges out into the middle of this boundless universe, he's suddenly a giant. His arms wave in the air, and his legs kick out from his hips, and it seems like he never has to make a save: The ball just misses its target, because he's turned chalk into walls, made the net into one more sanctuary, and blown himself up bigger than anyone else on the field. ■

Q+A: Eric Gagne

» Growing up in the suburbs of Montreal, Eric Gagne was an unlikely candidate to become the most dominant relief pitcher in baseball. The L.A. Dodgers' closer, who didn't speak any English until he was nineteen, started playing only so he had something to do in between hockey seasons. Eventually, he became one of a handful of French Canadians ever to make it to the major leagues. And last season, he converted all fifty-five of his save opportunities and compiled a 1.20 ERA, winning the National League Cy Young Award in a landslide.

—DOUG CANTOR

ESQ. Who's the best pitcher in the league?

EG Pedro Martinez. He has pinpoint control and a good change-up. There's a big difference between pitching and throwing, and Pedro can pitch.

ESQ. As a hockey guy, are you more comfortable hitting a guy with a pitch when you know he might come after you?

EG In the major leagues, I've never had to do it. It happened a lot in the minors. When I played against Wichita and El Paso in Double-A, we had four or five brawls.

ESQ. How many of those fights were you on the mound for?

EG [*laughs*] Four.

ESQ. They play "Welcome to the Jungle" at Dodger Stadium when you come into a game. Which closer has the best theme song?

EG Trevor Hoffman's is pretty awesome. It's "Hell's Bells." Mine's pretty good, too. It's all about the crowd. If the crowd gets into it, it pumps me up a lot more.

ESQ. Are there practical jokes that go on in the bullpen while you guys are killing time?

EG Last year, I had to carry the bag with all the candy bars and sunflower seeds. You're like a little slave. A little bitch. That's what they call it: the "bitch bag."

ESQ. Ballplayers are notorious for their superstitions. Do you have any?

EG I wear the same cap, same shoes, and same glove the whole season. I tie my left shoe before the right. *Always*. When I get in the bullpen, we have a little group routine. The relievers always say the same thing, and everybody answers the same thing.

ESQ. Do you ever trash-talk in French?

EG A *lot*. I yell in French so the umpires won't understand anything.

ESQ. What kind of stuff do you say?

EG Oh, you don't want to print that. There may be some French people that read this. Let's just say I don't say "Hi" and "How are you doing?"

The 30-Second Sermon

Big George Foreman

I WAS AT A SILENT AUCTION not long ago to raise money for a cancer treatment center. A poster of Muhammad Ali was one of the items offered. It was by the artist LeRoy Neiman. Now, Muhammad was a guy who did bother me for years—from the moment he defeated me in Zaire. He was the person I'd most envied, the person I'd hated more than anyone in the whole world. But I looked at that poster, and I bid what I thought would be way more than anyone else in the room. And you know what happened? Someone outbid me. Can you believe that? I left there upset that I *didn't* get it. And *that's* when I knew that I had truly overcome.

Real success means changin' your nature. It's one of the hardest things to do. And what makes it so hard is that sometimes we don't even know what needs changin'.

Everybody should look for someone to tell him what to change. A boy should put the question to his sister. And a sister to her brother. Because a brother or sister will tell you quicker and more truthfully than anyone else. A sister will watch her brother and say, "Just because a girl says hi, don't rush over there. Take your time. Think before you act." All girls want the most intelligent brother. Every boy wants a beautiful sister.

What if you're an only child? Who do you turn to then? Open your eyes. Brothers and sisters are all around you.

George Foreman, former two-time heavyweight champ and portable grill entrepreneur, is pastor of the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ in Houston.

»Yogurt for Men

Yogurt has become the sensible baby food of adult culture. In its popular form—the roo-small single-serving container, the chintzy tinfoil lid, the stagnant slurry of inexplicable liquid on top, the scant puree of bland fruit on bottom—each bite is less satisfying, more without substance, than the last.

Greek yogurt, on the other hand, has some heft. It is strained, meaning the whey is separated and removed. Its texture is sturdy, its flavor as thick and tart as sour cream. Each spoonful is a bite, not a compromise. A small bowl of the stuff at breakfast, drizzled with honey, bears no resemblance to the pabulum that we know as yogurt, but instead looks for all the world like an elaborate dessert. Better yet, it tastes that way, too. And while it has some fat, it's not without health benefits. Greek yogurt (available in a brand called Total) is loaded with *Lactobacillus acidophilus*, a natural bacteria that aids digestion by keeping intestinal flora in balance.

Greek yogurt is food, not a substitute for food. It makes you realize that yogurt ought to be considered a sort of essential, elemental offering, a daily delicacy, rather than a soupy, unsatisfying, parsed-out staple for obnoxious skinny people. —TOM CHIARELLA

Ask Dr. Oz

FREE ADVICE FROM A MEDICAL PROFESSIONAL!

I know my anger's no good for my soul but what about my body?

Depends on how you vent that anger. According to a recent study, it's overt hostility—as opposed to simmering rage—that represents the greater health risk. The study (published in *Circulation*, a journal of the American Heart Association) concluded that men who handle anger with hostility are 30 percent more likely than their mellower brethren to develop atrial fibrillation, a common heart flutter that can create blood clots and lead to stroke, whereas men who were deemed generally angry—but not hostile—are only 10 percent more likely to develop the condition. So Michael Corleone is probably okay, but Tony Montana needs to be careful.

Another interesting finding: Hostility is inversely related to education. The better a man's education, the study found, the better he is at finding nonhostile ways to handle his anger—good news for Esquire readers.

Hostility is a reptilian response. When you feel it coming on, simply have an out-of-body experience. Look back at what you're doing. This removes the emotion from the moment. You won't feel the impulse to defend your action anymore. And you'll be able to deal with the real factors that are causing the problem.

Dr. Mehmet Oz is a heart surgeon and the host of Second Opinion on the Discovery Channel. To ask him a question, go to esquire.com/talk.

THE RESTLESS MAN

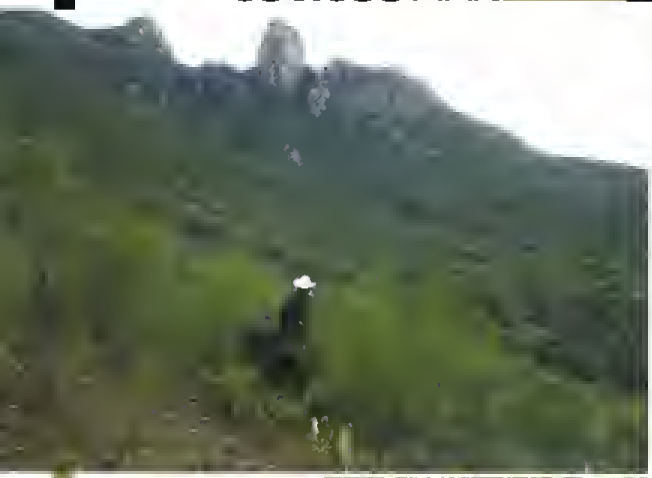
THIS MONTH Trekking to a forgotten paradise
WHERE Deep in Mexico's Sierra Madres
DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY Can you handle a couple of days of rigorous hiking? A few cactus scratches?
COST OF EIGHT-DAY ADVENTURE $550 (plus airfare)
DEGREE OF FUN It doesn't get more adventurous

By **CHRISTOPHER McDOUGALL**

"COULD YOU JACK THE ROUNDS OUT OF YOUR GUNS?" I ask the two Mexican *federales* jammed beside me in the pickup, digging deep in my pretty much non-ballistic Spanish for any vocab related to assault rifles. I mean, we're four-wheeling up a killer climb in the Sierra Madres, crashing through ruts deep enough to trigger the two semiautomatics in the footwells and—any second now, I'm sure—airmail chunks of my skull back home to the family. Reasonable request, right? So why does the driver start spazzing so hard, he's nearly head-butting the steering wheel, while his buddy on my other side, the one with the black *Policia Nacional* cap and the fat .45 jabbing welts into my hip, sounds as if he's suddenly gone asthmatic? *"Quieres un... un..."* Black Cap is wheezing, *"un paňal?"*

Do I want a diaper? Ah, okay, I gotcha. *cargado, cagado*. So I mucked my adjectives and asked about the load in my pants instead of the loaded rifle. Pretty funny, fellas. But I've got a little more on my mind right now than Spanish idioms.

I just hopped off the train from Chihuahua after an eleven-hour chug through deserts and mountain passes, arriving at a tiny whistle-stop deep in Mexico's Barrancas del Cobre, the wild and fabled Copper Canyons. I was supposed to meet a guy there named Skip McWilliams, a Copper Canyon legend who's survived more canyon crossings than most anyone except the cliff-dwelling Tarahumara Indians. Skip was to be waiting with pack mules to take me to a secret paradise he's discovered at the bottom of a lost canyon, an ancient hacienda hidden behind waterfalls and orange groves called Wa Chahun—the



land of sweet perfumes. Except no one at the lonely hut of a railroad station had ever heard of *Señor Eskeep*, or any mythical Wa'Chahuri for that matter. Maybe Eskeep was up in the village? This could be. How could I get there? This, no one could say. The last minibus was long gone. Luckily for twenty bucks, the two *federales* guarding the station were willing to abandon their post and drive me.

THE COPS DROP ME OFF in the center of Temoris, a Mexican Mayberry built around a town square stocked with laughing kids, knitting grannies, and a shit-faced village idiot who shakes my hand seventeen times while repeating in English, "Beer! Yes! You like?" The hotel, I'm told, is that lime green bunker without a sign, the one that looks like a Palm Beach bomb shelter. It's about twenty bucks for one of the eight rooms, and while I shouldn't expect any heat, I am promised a functioning toilet. Señor Eskeep? Oh, yes, says the hotel owner as she shoos chickens from the door with her foot. He passed through a week ago, maybe two. He should be back in another week, she thinks, or maybe two.

Traveling with Skip, I reflect after I dump my backpack and head off in search of food, must mean traveling just *like* Skip. When he first ventured into the Sierra Madre mountains in the early eighties, Skip was a Michigan T-shirt entrepreneur with a domestic headache and half-remembered fantasies of seeking enlightenment from mystic guru Indians. Back in Skip's teen years, a perpetually stoned buddy told him of a Stone Age wilderness where shadowy Tarahumara Indians grooved on peyote and brooded in secret cliffside caves. A man could lose himself out there, the stoner said, and return renewed—or not at all. So when Skip's personal life soured, he took a break from his two kids and soon-to-be ex and set off, so eager to be swallowed among the pines that he didn't bother with maps, gear, or any real idea of what the hell he was doing.

Twenty years later not much has changed. When I called to find out what I'd need for the expedition, I got the verbal equivalent of ass-scratching. "Maybe a sweater?" Skip offered. "It gets pretty cold on the trail. Below freezing, some nights." Okay, then, how about a sleeping bag, ground tarp, flashlight, base layers? "I guess, if you really *need* that stuff," Skip drawls in a voice so much like Jack Nicholson's that it's clear he's biting back *You big pussy*. He just figured to borrow a horse blanket from the guide. "And a water purifier?" I persisted, recalling a guy I know who's still leaking after contracting giardia in Mexico. Nah. Skip just gulps whatever water he finds. Been doing it for years.

Skip first heard about Wa'Chahuri from a guy who'd never actually seen it, an opera singer who claimed to be a descendant of the Basque settlers. His ancestors had set out more than two hundred years ago in search of the most inaccessible farmland they could find and kept pushing until they discovered a canyon oasis far beyond the last frontiers of the conquistadors. For centuries, Wa'Chahuri thrived as sort of a landbound Atlantis, where the rancheros grew

How to Experience This Adventure

FLY into Chihuahua. Stay the night (about $90). Wake to catch 6:00 a.m. flight. Then
RIDE the scenic Chihuahua Pacifico line eleven hours southwest to Temoris ($65)
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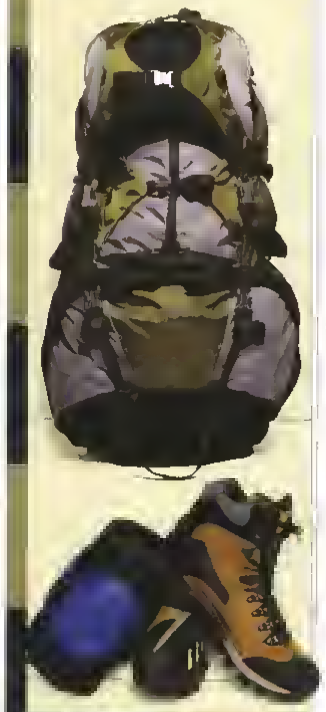
CATCH a truck ride ($40, through hotel) the next morning to sleepy Batosegachi.
HIRE Chico or Gregorio there to guide you on the two-day canyon hike down to Wa'Chahuri. Daily rate: $6, plus $5 for a couple of burros to carry supplies.
SPEND two days in Wa'Chahuri napping, swimming, and eating the flavorful meals prepared by the family that runs the hacienda. Price for paradise: $25 a day.
CONTACT Skip McWilliams in Michigan (800-776-3942) to make arrangements.

Pick your overnight hiking gear as you do your leafy toilet paper: carefully

***BACKPACK** Vortex STX. The foam panels on this midsize pack conform to any size waist, even after all those Ding Dongs. $199, vortexbackpacks.com. ***SLEEPING BAG** EMS Velocity 35. At one and a half pounds and the size of a football, this is the lightest, most compact sleeping bag at its temperature rating—35 degrees. Whoever said size doesn't matter definitely wasn't a camper. $149, ems.com. ***HIKING BOOTS** Vasque Zephyr GTX. The high ankles provide support while the self-cleaning soles keep mud from caking on. $160, vasque.com.



their own food and emerged once a year to haul their famously sweet oranges and mangoes up the side of the canyon. As generations passed, the family gradually died off until Wa'Chahuri was forgotten.

Skip and the singer trekked across two canyons and forged up a long, boulder-strewn river to see if it still existed. What they found were gorgeous ruins, plus an eighty-something Tarahumara Indian who'd been adopted as an orphan and still remained, the ranch's last caretaker. Until Skip arrived, no outsider had seen the place for decades. Skip later tracked down the hacienda's owner, an ancient woman who'd broken her hip during a Chihuahua excursion and was unable to return, and bought the whole shebang—ranch, orchards, and seven miles of canyon—for less than you'd pay for any house with running water in the United States. He invited Mexican friends to resettle in Wa'Chahuri as tenant farmers, and they immediately began pruning the orange trees and sprucing up the house. Once I heard about Wa'Chahuri from Skip's son, a pro mountain biker, I wangled an invitation.

And so far, despite the mystery of Skip's current whereabouts and my distaste for high-caliber hitchhiking, I'm already getting the same thrill Skip must have felt when he first came through these parts. Hell, I'm even enjoying Temoris. I find a nice little restaurant with a roaring fireplace, and within minutes my table is loaded with Tecates and tacos. Just as I'm tucking in, I hear Jack Nicholson drawl, "*Dios mío*. The gringos have invaded."

"Skip?"

"Yep," says the sun-browned guy who just slipped through the door. "Ready for a little walk?"

THE NEXT MORNING, Skip goes through a bizarre ritual while our guide, Gregorio, loads a tiny mule and two packhorses. First, Skip counts out three starched cotton shirts and folds them still on hangers, into an ancient rucksack. He slips out of his bucks and puts on a newer pair, two-toned and nicely polished. He smooths his shirttails into his crisp Levi's, slides his arms into a neat jean jacket, and flips up the collar. Finally, he slicks his silvery hair with Dippity do and jams his comb into his rear pocket.

The Fonz is ready to rumble.

"You, uh, don't have hiking boots?" I ask.

By way of answer, Skip scuffs out a little soft shoe. When he sees I don't know what the hell he's doing, he explains, "Americans with fancy shit are always wiping out on the rocks, but the Tarahumara never do. See why?" He points to Gregorio, whose gnarly feet are bare except for two strips of car tire held on by leather thongs. "They wear flat rubber shoes. Bucks and Hush Puppies have no-skid soles, just like theirs."

"And besides," he adds, his fifty eight-year-old eyes suddenly squinting in a mock leer and his lean old cowhand's body contorting into what I'm afraid is an actual dance move, "what if we meet a hot *muchacha* on the trail? Yeah, what if."

Once Skip has finished his spit and polish, Gregorio yanks a whippy twig off a tree, gives his lead mule a thwack, and we're off. Just past Gregorio's farm, the stony path softens into a dirt trail padded by pine needles, winding ahead on a gentle decline. It's exhilarating at first, bouncing along downhill with just snatches of sun warming the pine-scented air. But the trail soon gets mean, turning into slippery near vertical drops. Generations of goat and burro hooves have kicked parts of the trail into crumbly shale, requiring constantly tensed quads and exhausting concentration to navigate them. We descend five thousand feet, climb back out the other side, and enjoy a few hours of flat, mountain-high mesa before, all too soon, heading back down the next canyon. The views are stunning, but every time my mind wanders or eyes drift, I'm on my ass.

Skip, on the other hand, is unbelievable. He's skipping along in his bucks as fast as the pack animals. When I crouch by a stream, sweat soaked and panting, to refill my water bottle and shake in iodine tablets, he takes a few idle swigs from an old Pennzoil jug that Gregorio filled back at the farm and gazes dreamily into the distance. "I've asked everyone what's out there, and they all tell me nada," he says, pointing to the rolling ocean of pines stretching hundreds of miles to the northwest. "*That's* where I'm going next."

Me, I'm just praying for sleep. My arms are stinging with cactus scratches; my ass is bone-bruised from skidding out on gnarly twists in the path; my legs are so whipped they're twitching. We finally hit river as the sun is sinking behind the canyon wall, throwing such deep shadows that it's hard for me to go more than a few steps without tripping over rocks. I'm on the verge of embarrassing myself by asking for another breather when Skip sends a thrill through me by saying, "How about we stop for the night?"

THE Restless MAN

It's painful to imagine another day of this terrain, but once I settle my back against a downed tree and toast my feet by Skip's fire, the fatigue oozes away. As I drink in the whispering of the riverbank and the gurgling hiss of the water, I feel more drowsy at peace than any time since I stopped smoking dope in saunas.

At sunup, we heat leftover burritos by the fire, quickly down some coffee, then strike out for the final push to Wa Chahuri. Technically there's no trail anymore. We'll have to cross and recross the river, hauling ourselves over boulders as we make our way upstream. The horses can't handle this stretch, so Gregorio swings inland in a wide circling loop he remembers from helping harvest oranges at Wa'Chahuri as a boy.

Soon, I notice oranges overhead. Through the trees, high on the hill, I can just make out adobe walls and wood-shingled roofs and—*shit*—I'm down, grinding my teeth and seeing stars. Less than half a mile from the hacienda, on the flattest, easiest ground we've seen in two days, I twist the shit out of my ankle. I try soaking it in the glacial river, but it's still wincingly tender. Better to push on before it balloons, I figure, so I hobble across the river and up the steep, stoned driveway.

We're greeted by Mercedes, the tenant farmer's wife, offering perfect sweet-sour orange juice she's squeezed by hand and chilled in the spring. She shows us our rooms. They're spotless, the baked-mud floors swept till they're dustless, the beds made with amazingly crisp hand-washed sheets and thick blankets. I go for a swim, then lay naked on the rocks and doze. I wake up in time for the delicious goat stew and quesadillas Mercedes made for dinner.

We all share a few snorts of tequila while Mercedes's uncle Rafael tells the good one about the horny ranch hand and the farmer's wife, and then it's off to sleep like a mummy. The next morning, I discover that Rafael, besides being a skilled smut raconteur, is also a *sobador*—a massage therapist for mules, basically. He sits me in a sunny spot against a whitewashed wall and deep-tissue rubs my throbbing ankle. When he's done, I'm amazed at the improvement. "Good," Rafael smiles. "Now we won't have to shoot you."

Mercedes has breakfast ready by then, heaping plates of huevos rancheros with juice and coffee and spaghetti and fresh tortillas on the side. Afterward, belly groaning, I sit on one of the ancient stone walls and watch the arrival of two Tarahumara Indians. Ever since word got out that the orchards were tended again, the Tarahumara have begun returning to Wa Chahuri with burros and homemade crates, loading up on oranges to sell in the towns above.

After a while, I slink away to the river, picking a sackful of candylike orange-lemon hybrids to nosh while awaiting Mercedes's next killer meal. If it weren't for the dodgy ankle, I'd love to scale the mountain across the river and see what Wa Chahuri looks like from the sky. Instead, I hobble from water hole to water hole, each one deeper and more scenic than the last. Between the swims and naps, it's paradise here, timeless and stressless.

For me, at least. Skip, however, has found a little bug in his garden of Eden, or it found him, to be exact. After days of surreptitiously wiping my hands with antibacterial gel and refusing any water that wasn't treated with iodine pills, I was starting to feel a little precious every time Skip dropped to his knees and slurped a mouthful from a spring. Why couldn't I trust nature and live like the badass Basques who'd hammered this oasis out of canyon rock? Well, the sounds erupting from the outhouse give me all the answer I need.

But Skip is not a man to admit defeat, even after his bowels have long ago surrendered. "What the hell," he smiles wanly from bed, a bowl by his side, as he sends us on home without him. "I'm in no hurry to leave, anyway."

(Sex)

(BY STACEY GRENROCK WOODS)

■ You've got questions, she's got answers.

■ What's the deal with pinching nipples? All these how-to books say it's something women enjoy, but whenever I've done it, the only sound I've elicited is a yelp. There must be something I'm missing.

First, I need you to return the how-to books to Mr. Gest. Then I need you to think about timing. "When you're getting very close to orgasm, things that would normally feel painful suddenly feel pleasurable," says sex therapist Sandor Gardos. (Incidentally, this also explains the mystery of George Michael's career.) Ask yourself: Was I pinching nipples in the heat of the moment, or was I doing it in line at Urban Outfitters? Remember, everything is relative. Hanging from meat hooks in a dungeon is a form of torture, but with the right lighting and a DJ, it's a decent Tuesday night. Luckily for you, in 2004 there are as many nipple-stimulation preferences as there are colors of the rainbow. "I enjoy having my nipples sucked on—tugged a bit between someone's teeth," chirps professional working girl Caressa Kisses. "It really depends on how hot I am at the time. It's like pulling hair or nibbling the neck or spanking the ass." Ah, youth. There are even those who can't get enough. "Nipple toys are, believe it or not, among our best sellers," explains Gardos, who owns mypleasure.com. "Some women wear nipple toys during the day at work because they like constant stimulation." Stimulation of the sort that Minesweeper just can't provide.

Do people really [illegible]

Yours is a question that has hung like a dark cloud over many a Secret Santa gift exchange: Is the pleasure you receive cancelled out by the pleasure you are required to provide? Why don't people just do nothing? Yes, we'd all be happy with the decrease in Tower Records gift certificates but eventually, mark my words, the bottom would drop out. Besides, we don't want our children to grow up in a world without 69, do we? Of course not. Human sexuality counselor Sally Fogel tells us that "sometimes people don't like to have to concentrate both on what they're feeling and what they're doing. They'd rather just sort of experience something and not have to be aware." (See, I told you there was a reason Josh Groban sells records.) But if there's one thing I learned from *Under the Tuscan Sun*, it's that sometimes we have to look for the good things in life. "Even if 69 is not your most favorite thing," says Fogel, "if you do it every once in a while, where's the problem?" So get in there and start sucking. Future generations are counting on you.

What's jelqing

Jelqing refers to a penis enlarging technique that any guy with a passing familiarity with masturbation can perform. Proponents claim that placing the thumb and forefinger around the base of the penis and pulling upward every day for about thirty minutes will cause the penis's spongy tissue to fill with blood and expand permanently. According to some sources, jelqing originated in the Middle East by fathers "preparing their sons for marriage," which is one way of putting it. First is a "warm up," in which a warm bath or hot towel is used to increase blood flow to the penis. Then comes the "workout" (or "jelqout," if you'd rather), followed by the customary shame, loneliness, and promises made to oneself, ultimately broken. But if you're hoping for permanent enlargement, I'm afraid the jelq's on you. Enter urologist Stanley J. Swierzewski III to spoil everyone's fun: "First, some basic anatomy: The penis is not a muscle that you can make bigger with exercise." Erection size, he says, is predetermined by two tubes within the penis called corpora, which are not stretchable. If they were, you would never achieve a firm erection. Your penis would be, as the doctor puts it, "a soft balloon filled with blood" (which, coincidentally, is the title of my childhood memoir, due out later this month). All in all, if it walks like a duck and it quacks like a duck, it's probably a masturbating duck. Anyone who tells you differently is just fulqing with you.

Got a sex question of your own? Send it to esquire.com/talk

ILLUSTRATION BY JOHN CONEE

Lucas Strikes Back

Everyone seemed rarin' to make another Indiana Jones sequel this summer. (Go figure.) The studio was salivating for it. Steven Spielberg was ready with a script. But then the only man who really mattered *blinked*. BY KIM MASTERS

MAYBE IT WAS that giant boulder. But one evening in February 2000, Steven Spielberg and George Lucas went to an American Film Institute dinner honoring Harrison Ford, and soon after they watched that image of rolling doom on the screen, they decided to get serious about bringing back Indiana Jones.

In some ways, reviving the franchise seems like an obvious idea. What a collection of talent! What a collection of grosses! But a lot has happened since the Lost Ark was raided in 1981. And many in Hollywood doubt that doing it again is a good idea.

"How old is Harrison Ford now? Sixty-five?" asks a big-name director who has worked with the star. "Who wants to see that?" (Ford will actually turn sixty-two in July, but it's nice to know that people say this about men once in a while.) And there could also be an issue of concept fatigue. How many of the kids who make up the heart (not to say the brain) of today's audience care about Indiana Jones? "This is a movie for old people at this point," says the marketing executive of one studio dismissively. And the idea of paying homage to the old serials was fresh when Spielberg and Lucas cooked it up, but since then we've seen *The Mummy*, *Tomb Raider*, and, well, even *Hidalgo*.

But none of these problems seem to be what has bedeviled—and probably doomed—the project. Paramount, no doubt with an eye to those grosses, did what any studio would do and said yes. For Paramount in particular, being associated with a renowned blockbuster sounded good then and probably sounds even better by now. The studio has been starved for hits and bad-mouthed for being cheap, risk averse, and talent unfriendly. So linking arms with the biggest names in the business would have public-relations value even if the profit might not be huge.

And with this group of talent, it's hard to figure how a studio comes out very far ahead. Normally, between the two of them, Spielberg and Ford would take more than 40 percent of the gross. If Sean Connery is in the mix—as rumor had it—that could be another 10 percent. So maybe half the profits are gone, and whatever's left over (at least according to the original Indy deal) would have to be split fifty-fifty with Lucas, who owns the franchise and produces the films. Still, according to a knowledgeable source, everyone sacrificed something to make it work. "No one's going to make a fortune," this source says. "There are four very powerful entities involved."

To be sure, the deal wasn't as tough as Fox's for the *Star Wars* series. Fox goes to all the trouble of releasing those movies—and it's not the work of an afternoon—for a piddling percentage of the gross. Fox doesn't own the negatives and doesn't participate in the merchandise licensing. (The only filmmaker who has managed to control and collect on a scale comparable with

Lucas is Mel Gibson.)

On the other hand, Fox doesn't pay the bills. "You're in a risk-free environment," explains an executive formerly involved in those negotiations. "If it grosses a lot, it's not bad money."

Paramount would have to pay the Indy bill, but a top executive there says the studio managed to work out a reasonable deal. Another says Lucas and Spielberg could be relied on to keep the budget somewhere below "a fortune." And these executives say they were heartened last year by the more than $150 million worth of sales for the DVD box set of the first three Indiana Jones movies (though, of course, they didn't know about that when they agreed to make Indy 4).

Still, the deal required negotiation that was, by the account of yet another studio insider, "tortuous." And while Viacom entertainment chief Jon Dolgen undoubtedly squeezed out what he could for the studio, there was one factor he couldn't change: Paramount was to have no control over the project. The studio would finance development of the script, and after a time the Indiana Jones team was to return with a screenplay, cast, and proposed budget. Paramount was to have a short window in which to pull the trigger.

So, no, it doesn't seem to be financing or opportunity or the changing movie marketplace that is proving to be the problem with bringing Indy back. That apparently has more to do with the Dark Lord himself, George Lucas—one of the few forces in the universe that can get between Spielberg and anything he wants to do.

The Funniest DVD Commentaries

Whether it details the hubris of a producer, the paranoid fantasies of a director, or a star's struggle with the English language, a killer DVD commentary track is that unstoppable condiment that can kick a subpar flick up a notch. Especially if it's unintentionally funny. Here are a few you shouldn't miss. —CHRIS KAYE

» *Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines*

Commentators: Arnold Schwarzenegger and director Jonathan Mostow.
Details: The Republicandroid issues platitudes consistent with his womanizing, like this one about costar Kristanna Loken's robo-boobs: "There's some guys that like little breasts and there's some guys who like big breasts, so wouldn't it be nice if you could play both sides, you know, sometimes even simultaneously?"

» *This Is Spinal Tap* (special edition)

Commentators: The band.
Details: The trio remain in character for this commentary to their 1984 mockumentary, complaining of the "hatchet job" perpetrated by documentarian Marty DiBergi (Rob Reiner). It's like getting two *Taps* for the price of one.

» *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* (Criterion edition)

Commentators: Author Hunter S. Thompson and producer Laila Nabulsi.
Details: We're near Barstow when Thompson audibly gets his swerve on, drinking and making noises as if he's inhaling elephant dung through a cocktail straw. His remarks are true to form: from rants about homosexuals (director Terry Gilliam is "a limey fag cartoonist") to nitpicking Johnny Depp's performance. "The unconscionable rudeness to the dwarf, I felt, was a horrible insult to me."

» *Slap Shot* (twenty-fifth anniversary special edition)

Commentators: The Hanson brothers.
Details: The minor-league-hockey-playing Hanson brothers (not the former teenyboppers from Tulsa) muse on what it was like to essentially portray themselves—but mostly they just reminisce about which guys in the stands they actually beat the living snot out of.

» *The Rules of Attraction*

Commentator: Carrot Top. And no, he's not in the film.
Details: Writer-director Roger Avary opted out of recording a commentary, apparently feeling that prop comic Carrot Top would do a better job elucidating the themes in Bret Easton Ellis's tale of nihilistic coeds. And actually, he sort of does, in a base kind of way.

EVEN THOUGH LUCAS and Spielberg have talked about a sequel off and on since 1993, this time it looked as though they were really moving. And it's easy to understand how they might have been tempted to go back to a time in their careers when the stakes were still high—when they were young, hung, and emerging as the formidable players that they would become. The principals blocked out time on their calendars to get the movie done. To everyone's delight, M. Night Shyamalan—blazing hot off *The Sixth Sense*—was interested in writing the script.

But the deal-making ground on for so long that Shyamalan dropped out. Paramount eventually turned to Frank Darabont, who wrote not only *The Shawshank Redemption* and *The Green Mile* but a number of installments of the *Young Indiana Jones Chronicles* television series. Darabont was thrilled.

Meanwhile, Lucas was immersed in completing the latest installments of the *Star Wars* saga, the next of which will be released in 2005. By the accounts of those who have worked with him, he isn't one to multitask when he's making a film. That left Spielberg and Darabont to work out the script. Imagine Darabont's joy when Spielberg pronounced that he liked Darabont's draft, except for some quibbles with the third act. Darabont reworked the screenplay and a few weeks later—last fall—Paramount was told that Spielberg would shoot the picture in July 2004.

And then everything went silent.

The problem, by all accounts, was Lucas. He didn't like the script—which Paramount executives never got to see. Darabont, apparently, was stunned. At a film festival earlier this year, he went so far as to finger Lucas as the culprit, explaining that Spielberg had deferred to his partner out of respect for their "long and close friendship."

And by several accounts that seems to be the case. (Darabont, Spielberg, and Lucas all declined to be interviewed for this article.) Spielberg told an associate that he felt Lucas yielded to him on certain issues when they made the last installment in the series—Lucas had reservations about casting Connery as Indy's dad, for example—and that he felt it was his turn to return the favor.

What followed Darabont's rather mild statement was an explosion of postings on film-geek Web sites, many reviling Lucas for his plan to rework Darabont's script. "If George Lucas wasn't already on the shit lists of geeks everywhere, this news would have put him there," raged one. "What kind of ego must it take to turn a go-picture with Steven Spielberg into a development deal?"

And therein lies a tale of remarkable transformation.

THE STORY OF HOW Spielberg and Lucas cooked up the idea for *Raiders of the Lost Ark* on a beach in Hawaii is part of Hollywood lore. It happened in 1977, when Spielberg was riding high on *Jaws*. Lucas was promising but not yet anointed. *Star Wars* was opening that very week, and the numbers were huge. Lucas had been so worried that he left the mainland when the picture opened. Spielberg had insisted the picture would be a hit.

The two were friends—and rivals. Lucas had already vowed that he would make a film that would surpass *Jaws*. "He was always more competitive with me than I was with him," Spielberg says in Peter Biskind's book *Easy Riders, Raging Bulls*. Before *Star Wars* opened, they wagered on its grosses versus those of *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, which was to be released later that year. Spielberg bet that *Star Wars* would win. In fact, *Star Wars* crushed *Close Encounters* and surpassed *Jaws* to become what was then the highest-grossing film of all time.

Spielberg and Lucas had changed the landscape of filmmaking. Spielberg established the blockbuster-with-a-huge-opening-weekend while Lucas demonstrated the power of merchandising. By the time they were ready to make *Raiders*, their situations had changed. Spielberg was coming off the overbudget and potentially career-ending bomb *1941*. Meanwhile, Lucas was making unheard-of deals for the sequels to *Star Wars*. The man who had emphatically rejected the Hollywood system would pay for the pictures and own them. He would control everything. (Spielberg, by comparison, has never risked his own money on a film.)

When *Raiders* was made, Lucas's terms were so tough that executives at other studios were appalled. "How odd to remember that it was the famously tight-fisted Michael Eisner, then the young head of Paramount Pictures, who defied the town to make the deal. When he heard about it, MCA president Sid Sheinberg—Spielberg's mentor—shouted, 'Michael Eisner just made a deal that's going to destroy this business!'"

That didn't happen. With the help of *Raiders*, Spielberg quickly recovered and went on to establish himself as one of the most skilled and commercially potent directors in history. Some may debate his artistic success, but Spielberg has stretched in many directions, from *Jurassic Park* to *Schindler's List* to *A.I.* Meanwhile, Lucas has been in the vanguard of technological change, but as a moviemaker, he has emerged as something quite different.

"One has continued to be the most successful filmmaker in the world," says a former studio chief who has worked with both. "The other is certainly the most successful businessperson. George Lucas is primarily a businessman."

In fact, in the eyes of many film fans he has become the evil empire itself. "Over the years, George—who used to be the coolest god of creativity—has become the archenemy of every blogger and every geek," marvels a longtime Lucas associate. "It's very discouraging, but in many ways he's earned it."

Lucas has continued to mine the same vein as his returns have diminished, artistically if not financially. "There's something almost constipated about what's happened to his artistic vision," laments the associate. "Look how dead the last few movies have been. So rigid and stiff."

Lucas presents himself as being impervious to these criticisms, and some of those who have worked with him accept that he actually is. "Everybody hates Jar Jar, but he just

cackles about it and says it's the second-best-selling action figure," says the associate. (Lucas was almost certainly kidding, since he knows that's not true.)

In his long-standing resentment of Hollywood, it seems, the deal has become Lucas's art form. "It's very rare that somebody will go for all blood," says a former Fox executive. "But he bled everyone." While the studio was protected from risk, the toy companies were not. When the action figures didn't sell as expected in the second *Star Wars* go-round, the results were disastrous. "Most of us try to make good deals, but George—he made killer deals across the board. I mean killer," says a licensing executive at another studio. "I think it took Hasbro four or five years to recover. It really set the whole licensing business back. People were saying our business was dead after that."

These days, associates paint a picture of Lucas as a man, in the words of his onetime biographer Dale Pollock, "cocooned in his own world" at Skywalker Ranch—a man pleasing nobody but himself.

Some wonder whether Lucas, still feeling the old competitive instinct, is jealous of Spielberg's success as a filmmaker. But most who know him insist that he accepts and admires his friend's success. His issues with Indy 4 may lie elsewhere: money (was the risk to the franchise worth the potential reward?) and, most of all, control.

Biographer Pollock points to the script as the product of Spielberg and Darabont. "Who's left out?" he asks. "And who has veto power?" When it comes to Indiana Jones, he says, Lucas is proprietary. Other than *Star Wars*, it's all he has left as a moviemaker. "They're his pictures, and he's almost obsessive in his desire to control," says Pollock.

A longtime Lucas insider concedes that Lucas is indeed proprietary about Indiana Jones—and should be. "George has created this character," he says. "It's been George's role in the triumvirate to be the driving force on the story and script." This source adds that it's unfair to cast Lucas as greedy. "He did *Young Indiana Jones*," he says. "He was trying to use this beloved character to teach kids about history. He worked quite a number of years on a project that didn't make him much money."

This source also insists that Hollywood likes to accuse Lucas of greed because he got out of town and escaped—in every sense—from the industry's clutches. "That pisses people off in L.A.," he says. But he insists that Lucas should be thanked and not reviled. "The reason that Indy 4 hasn't happened, he says, is because none of the big players want to sell out the franchise. Here are three people who want to do something that's really worthy," he says. "The story is that people are choosing to get it right. *Mission: Impossible 2*—they didn't even have a script and they started shooting! That's Hollywood. This is un-Hollywood."

If it doesn't work out, Spielberg will survive the disappointment. "He liked the idea of it, but I don't think he was in love with doing it," says a fellow DreamWorker. He's done with *The Terminal* with Tom Hanks, and he's working on *The War of the Worlds* with Tom Cruise, among many other projects. Spielberg's instincts may falter on occasion, but he is still the biggest gorilla in town. (Mel Gibson hasn't surpassed him quite yet.)

At this point, the official story is that the project is not dead and that Lucas will come up with a storyline himself. Many in Hollywood are skeptical that it will ever happen.

As for Paramount, it can console itself with a 50 percent share in Spielberg's *The War of the Worlds*—assuming, of course, that the director and Cruise can come up with a script that they like. ■

The Day I Watched My Brother Drown

Last summer I looked on as my brother and three of his best friends slipped into a churning river, one after another, and disappeared. In a split second, I had to decide whether to go in after them.

BY BEN ALTSCHULER, AS TOLD TO TERRANCE NOLAND

■ Left: Dave and Ben Altschuler at Ben's graduation from the University of Vermont. Three months later: rescue workers scour the waters at Split Rock Falls for the bodies of Dave and his friends.

IT'S STILL VERY HARD FOR ME to picture certain parts of that day. But one thing I'll always remember is the look on their faces. Panic. It was horrifying. They were so close to me, and there was nothing I could do to help them. It would have been horrible losing just one of them, but all four—I just can't comprehend it sometimes.

I always tried to be protective of Dave. As a kid, I let him bunk with me because he was scared of the dark. When he got his driver's license and would be out after curfew, I would tell him, "Just be careful. Just drive the speed limit so you don't get pulled over." And at camp when he went out, I'd nag him about having a designated driver. He was always like, "I've got it under control, Ben."

I'm a Baco boy. So were my brother and his friends. Camp Baco is a summer camp in upstate New York. Most of the kids are from Long Island, but you get a couple, like us, from Philly. My brother and I had been going since we were little. Dave, who was eighteen, had been a counselor the past two years, and I came back last year, at twenty-two, to be the head hiking counselor. Outside of my parents, Camp Baco is probably the most important thing to me. A lot of those first things you do in life, you do them at camp. You kiss a girl, you drink your first beer, just those adolescent things. It's a very tight-knit place. Everyone at the camp seems to enjoy the same kinds of things—sports, music, stuff like that. I don't know if anyone could tell you why the bond is so strong, but I can see it with my friends, with Dave's friends. Those are the people you always seem to turn to in crisis.

Of all of Dave's friends, Jordan was the closest. You could not separate them. They both started camp at the same time, around age eight, and they were in the same bunk. Jonah and Adam started coming soon after that. All four of them were incredibly tight. They went to each other's bar mitzvahs, and Dave, when he was in boarding school in upstate Massachusetts, would go down to New York on weekends to meet up with them.

They were all waiters at camp the same year—that's like a counselor in training. And when I came back last year, Dave told me, "Watch out for us, the waiters of '01. We're real tight. We don't back down for each other." I guess it showed that day.

AUGUST 12, 2003, was the exact date. A Tuesday. Five days before camp ended. The day before had been raining hard, horrible. It was flooding in camp almost. I remember lying in my bunk thinking I hadn't seen a rain like that at camp for years. That next day started a little overcast, but it blew out by the time we got to Split Rock Falls. It was a damn nice late-summer day in the Adirondacks. A perfect day.

It was our last day off of the year—just a normal, run-of-the-mill day off. The only thing, it was the first day off I ever took with my brother. We had just done our first overnight hike together, leading a bunch of fourteen-year-old campers, and I thought it would be cool to go with Dave and his friends.

We grabbed some breakfast and got to Split Rock around 12:30—twenty-five of us, maybe more. Split Rock is the main spot to go on a day off. There's a stream that goes over these waterfalls, and there's a pretty steep path just to get in. As you come down, there's this big pool of water where you can hang out and swim. You can lie on this little island in the middle. People bring lawn chairs and you sit in a circle. You talk, joke, drink a beer if you want. You're out from camp, just having a little fun for a while.

Around 2:15, 2:30, I noticed that Dave and his three friends were starting to walk down-

These photos, taken three months after the accident, show the same stretch of waterfall under similar conditions, with the river rushing after heavy rain. The circle marks the spot where the boys went in.

One second they were gone. It just were all struggling, and the next, like that, they water was very sucked them in. We couldn't even see them. The dark, very deep, and it was bubbly from churning.

stream. They had told me before that they had been going down to these whirlpools the last couple weeks. I had heard of counselors going there when I was a camper, but I had never been, so I was curious and started following them. I was moving pretty fast. I wasn't exactly sure where to go, so I wanted to keep them in view. The hike down was steep, and it was wet from the spray of these two big waterfalls. I mean, it was dangerous—really, really dangerous—to hike down this. But, you know, we did it anyway.

Dave, Jordan, Adam, and Jonah reached the pool first. I was still twenty, twenty-five feet back from them, and another friend of ours, Sam, was coming down behind me. It was a tiny hole, maybe six feet in diameter. Water was pouring in from the falls, and because of the rain, it looked like it was churning harder than it should. My brother started to get in.

I yelled down, "Dave, it looks a little rough." He didn't say anything. He may have heard me and just not acknowledged me. That would be an obvious little-brother thing to do. As he was lowering himself in, I remember he kind of hesitated for a second. It looked like he was having second thoughts. But he was already immersed to his belly button, holding on to the wet ledge. Then he just kind of slipped in. Did he go in willingly? That's going to be a mystery forever.

I was watching him, and at first it didn't look like there was anything wrong. Then I saw something. Maybe it was that he was treading water a little too hard. But something just triggered in my mind that he was not all right, that he needed help.

His three friends were sitting nearby, but they didn't seem to be noticing, so I said, "You know, guys, I think there's something wrong." Dave said something to Jordan that I couldn't hear, and then Jordan got in to try to help him. Jordan looked all right for a second, then *he* started to struggle. So now we had two people struggling, and I was thinking, This is not good. So I yelled down, "Jonah, Adam, you guys gotta try to help them. But don't get in the water."

By then things had gotten pretty hectic. So I don't know for sure whether they heard me. But once they realized that Jordan and Dave were struggling, they jumped in. There was not a second of hesitance. They just went right in. They were all strong swimmers, but Adam and Jonah were the strongest. Adam was head of the swimming program at camp, and both were all-county swimmers in high school. I think they thought they could get in there and save their friends. They were thinking with their hearts.

At this point, I was like, I gotta get down there. But it was so steep and slippery, I had to take my time. One wrong step and I would split my head open. I had to scoot down on my butt onto different ledges, holding on to things. It was frustrating. Even going my fastest, it probably took me a minute and a half. Sam got down right after me.

By that time, all four of them were struggling to stay up. I was standing on the ledge and Jonah was right there, five feet away from me, but I couldn't reach him. They were fighting so hard that it seemed like maybe they were getting closer, that maybe they could grab on to a ledge or we could grab them. We were screaming at them, "Swim! Swim hard!"

Had I been down there when they went in, I might have jumped in, too. But coming down that slope, Sam and I had time to kind of observe what was happening. We both realized the best way to try to save them was to do something else.

So we started looking around for a stick, something to reach out to them. And that's when they went under. One second they were all struggling, and the next, like that, they were gone. It just sucked them in. We couldn't even see them. The water was very dark, very deep, and it was bubbly from churning. We were like, "We gotta find a log! We gotta find a log!" Right above us—five, six feet above us—we found this long stick. Sam went up and grabbed it, and we started prodding it into the water, seeing if maybe they were close to the surface and we could somehow work a human ladder to grab them.

Then I started to think, It's a whirlpool and it streamed out and down. Someone might get spit out, and that would be our chance to do something. We were still using the stick when I looked over and saw the leg of a body rolling through the water fall. I could see the shoe. I ran downstream

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANDREW METHERINGTON

and jumped into the water. It was no higher than my chest, and I thought I'd easily be able to find whoever had rolled out. But I couldn't. And even though the water wasn't that high, it was pushing me over.

Another one of my friends from camp, Avi, he came down because he heard us yelling. He looked downstream, where the water streamed through this narrow opening, and said, "I think I see a body on a rock." It turned out that it was Jonah. Whether he went by before I got in or went right by me, he had ended up downstream. Avi, Sam, and another of our friends ran down and started to perform CPR on him. I couldn't go down there. I was so emotionally distraught.

At that point, it was dawning on me that it had been ten or fifteen minutes, and the four of them might be, you know, gone. I just kind of lost it and ran up to the road. I probably should have retraced my steps out, but instead I climbed straight up a wall. This wall was close to vertical, made of loose rock and dirt, and I was in flip-flops. But your adrenaline kicks in. I could've run up anything at that moment. I just wanted to get out of there.

I got up to the road, where everyone else had gathered, and just sat down. I'm still not sure who called 911, but they got there incredibly fast. The authorities were telling us that in cold water a body can survive longer, so they were going to bring divers in. I just started pacing back and forth. I was so blown away by what was happening, I wasn't even paying attention.

It was a hard place to make a rescue, because the walls are so steep and the water moves so quickly. Even with oxygen tanks, the divers couldn't go into the whirlpool. There was really nothing they could do.

Around three o'clock the next day, they found Dave, Adam, and Jordan. All three of them were together under some ledge about twenty feet deep. They had to use these cameras on a pole to locate them. This was deep, deep water. I found out later that because the water was churning so fast, the surface was very bubbly. It aerated the water, which takes away your natural buoyancy. That's why they were struggling so hard. You could have put the best swimmer in the world in that pool that day and he would have drowned. It was a death machine.

My parents were in Italy at the time, and it was three o'clock in the morning there when they found out. When we met them at the airport, they came up and hugged me for about five minutes. I don't think they said anything. They wanted to get to the morgue as fast as possible and view the body. So that's what we did.

My parents, my uncle Jon, my uncle Daniel, they went in together to look at the body. And then I went in by myself. I wanted a more private time with him. I didn't do much. I just looked at him. I was happy to see he wasn't bloody. He looked like Dave. He looked completely normal to me, just a little paler. That gave me some comfort. It looked like he was sleeping, like when he falls asleep in the car. I kind of touched his head and was like, Fuck, and I walked out.

I'VE BEEN TRYING to figure out how what happened has changed me. I was raised Jewish and I went to Hebrew school, and I was always taught that when these bad things happen, they're for a reason. And you're supposed to learn from that. But at this point, I don't have a reason. I haven't learned anything from this. It's just something so horrible that happened to me that it's made me question my faith. I don't know if I believe in God anymore. And if I do, I really hate him. I think he's a real asshole. I still celebrate the traditions of Judaism, but as far as belief in God, I don't know if I can swing that anymore.

It's not how I ever imagined losing someone close to me would feel. I thought I'd be crying all the time. And that's not what happened. I couldn't force tears out. I wanted to. I felt like I had to. But I just don't think that's how I respond to a tragedy like this.

It's a weird feeling. It's hard for me to explain. The closest thing I can compare it to is when you're in college. You wake up at three in the morning and you're like, Damn, I didn't study for that test tomorrow, and you're really nervous and can't go back to sleep. That's what I feel almost every day. Some sort of anxiety.

The funniest things will trigger it. I can watch a movie, and it's about someone's brother drowning, and it doesn't do anything to me. But I was at a friend's house maybe a week or two after the funeral, and we were playing NBA Street 2. That was a game my brother had on PlayStation 2, and I had just started being able to beat him at it. I remember just sitting there watching a couple of my friends play, and I almost broke down. I really had to contain myself. It's just random things like that.

The first couple days, I got very numb. Then I got angry. I got angry at a lot of people. I got angry at my brother. I thought he got off easy. For the rest of our lives, we have to deal with the pain. That's a really shitty thing to do to the people you love. I even got angry at my parents. Maybe if they made him come home at twelve o'clock every night, he wouldn't have gotten so independent. It's the most irrational thing, I know.

I was angry at myself for weeks. When Dave walked up to that whirlpool, why didn't I just say, "Don't go in, man. That's the stupidest thing you're gonna do. You're not gonna get out of there." Why wasn't I tough like that? The one time he really needed me, the one time I wasn't nagging him just to be nagging, the one time he really needed my help, I couldn't protect him.

My uncle Danny, my dad's youngest brother, he went down to Split Rock the morning they were searching for the bodies. He immediately told me, "Listen, you're not to blame. For the rest of your life if you ever think you are to blame, I will always tell you you're not. You made the best decision you ever could make in not getting in the water." And I understood that. It's just that when I think about the best decision I ever made in my life, four people died. ■

Jordan Satin, 19
Dave's closest friend, went in first to try to save him. A sophomore—to be at the University of Colorado—he had gone to high school on Long Island with childhood pals Jonah and Adam.

Jonah Richman, 18
Jumped in after seeing both Jordan and Dave in trouble. A strong swimmer, he had been co-captain with Adam of their high school team. He was majoring in journalism at Northwestern.

Adam Cohen, 19
Went in about the same time as Jonah. An all-county swimmer in high school, he had just wrapped up his freshman year at Wisconsin, where Dave was planning to join him in the fall.

Esquire

Beware of this man. He's won every race that he was supposed to lose. By Charles P. Pierce

The Mis-underesti-mation of John Kerry

Photo by CHRIS BUCK

This is how the story will begin for me,

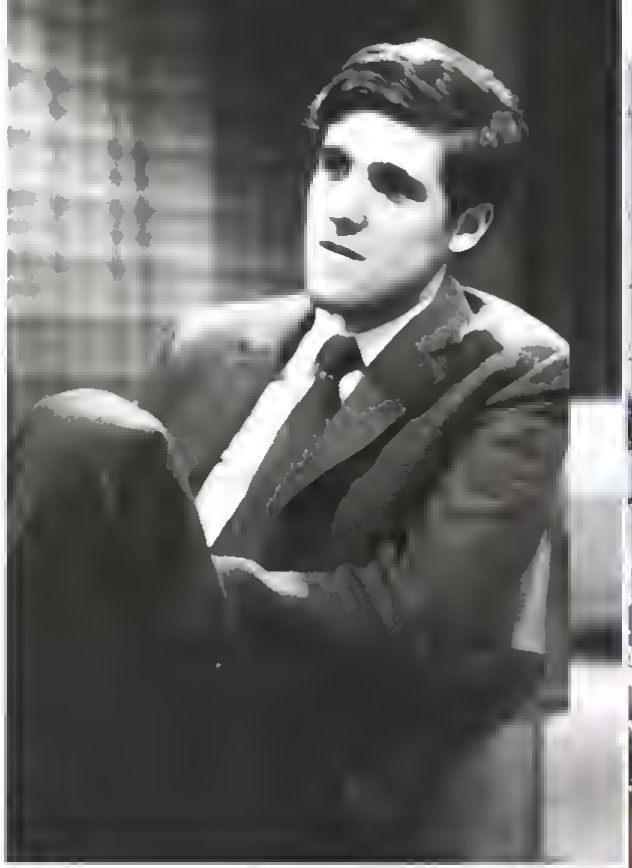
when I tell it in another saloon some day, maybe ten years from now, as the ocean darkens outside the windows. It begins with the sun falling over Falmouth Harbor on Cape Cod, falling literally over a yardarm and the water going gold first, and then a deeper blue.

It was the middle week in August of the election year 1982. The Falmouth Road Race had been run that morning and thousands of people had shown up for the race and for the extended weekend frivolity that had come to surround it, which meant there were thousands of hands to shake and dozens of politicians to shake them, even politicians running for lieutenant governor. John Nance Garner is famous for having described the vice-presidency of the United States as being not worth "a bucket of warm piss." Being lieutenant governor of Massachusetts is pretty much the same thing, except without the bucket.

Nevertheless there were people running for it, and one of them was Evelyn Murphy, who'd hired a truck to follow along behind the racers and pick up all their discarded paper cups and orange peels. The truck had big signs on it promoting her candidacy. Her principal opponent, a former assistant district attorney for Middlesex County named John Kerry, had spent the day on his boat with his personal aide, a former PGA Tour caddie named Chris Greeley. The two of them came wandering into the saloon as the afternoon waned.

There were five of us there, sipping some cool restoratives and Kerry was telling tales of his days as an antiwar counterculture hero in New York City at what turned out to be the shank end of the Age of Aquarius. One of our company had been a bartender at the late, lamented Lion's Head in Greenwich Village at roughly the same time, so he and Kerry had run in the same circles, and they swapped stories about who had gone home with whom at the end of whatever long evening. The names flew and I lost track of them after a while, and I believe I somehow ended up with the notion that G. Gordon Liddy had participated in enthusiastic tag-team gymnastics with Joni Mitchell and Bella Abzug.

At that time, I knew what everybody in Massachusetts knew about John Kerry. We knew about the decorated hero from Vietnam who, at twenty-seven, had come home and asked



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE. Kerry during his first race for Congress, February 1970. With President Kennedy, August 26, 1962. That summer Kerry dated Jacqueline Kennedy's half sister, Janet Auchincloss, who's at the wheel. Kerry presents Vice-President Hubert Humphrey with a petition signed by fellow Yale students advocating legal protests against the war in Vietnam and condemning draft-card burnings, October 1965.

Congress a question that a lot of people should've asked in 1965: "How do you ask a man to be the last man to die for a mistake?" We knew that what was supposed to have been a golden political career had run aground. He'd lost a bizarre congressional race in 1972, entered the DA's office in Middlesex County, and was now running for lieutenant governor because he had to prove he could get elected to *something*.

"That race," an old Kerry aide recalls, talking about one of the least significant political offices ever devised by the hand of man, "was sudden death, because if he'd lost, that would've been twice, and that was the ball game."

We also knew Kerry was aloof and patrician, given to unfortunate bouts of earnest public sonority. In short, we knew he wasn't a pol, didn't have an easy connection to people, was not a natural. We *knew* this, mind you, because we'd seen him run for office, and because we'd seen him lose, and if he'd been a pol, he could've overcome his wealth and privilege the way Jack Kennedy had. Nevertheless, here he was, in the softening summer evening, not merely good company but great saloon company, the way a pol is great saloon company. A storyteller, for christsakes, the way the old guys are up in the joints on Beacon Hill, the gin blossoms exploding on their faces like old sins detonating beneath the skin. This was the first time I realized that John Kerry was not completely grim. Hell, it was the first time I realized he wasn't made out of wood.

And now here he is, son of a bitch, two decades later, up on a stage in Washington, D.C., spotlights thrown all around him, the presumptive presidential nominee of the Democratic party. He's surrounded by former presidents Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton and flanked by the other candidates who'd had all those qualities that John Kerry is supposed to lack—John

"HOW DO YOU ASK A MAN to be the last man to die for a mistake?" Twenty-seven-year-old Kerry asks the famous question as he testifies before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, April 22, 1971. Kerry concedes defeat after losing a congressional race he had been favored to win, Lawrence, Massachusetts, 1972. Kerry and John Lennon at a peace rally, Bryant Park, New York City, 1971.

Edwards, who had more charisma, and Howard Dean, who had more passion—and all of whom John Kerry had beaten like tin drums in an astonishing piece of politics between Christmas and the first month of the New Year.

He mortgaged a house. He worked the rooms in Iowa until there weren't any rooms left. He put in place a pol's operation that got people to the places he needed them to be, and he left the rest of them, the charismatic ones and the passionate ones, as the pols of my grandfather's generation would say, in the ha'penny place, which is Irish for the cheap seats.

He did what he had to do. He surrendered, as any candidate must, to the importance of the utterly trivial and to how important the irrelevant can become. He took all the japes about his second wife, Teresa Heinz Kerry, the millionaire heiress to a condiment fortune. He dealt with the discovery that his ancestry was Jewish. He put more of his life on the slab than ever before.

And now Kerry is lined up against an incumbent with $190 million to spend in defense of his office and as deftly bloodthirsty a national political operation as has ever been constructed. The Bush campaign is defining him—as a waffler, as a Massachusetts liberal, as a gloomy presence on the national scene—and he's been engaged in what his longtime friends call one of his periods of political walkabout, in which his intellectual, ruminative side overpowers his combative political id.

However, it's important to remember that Edwards thought he saw vulnerability there, and so did Howard Dean, and so did most of the political smart set. Now John Kerry's in the spotlight and they're all applauding him.

In the fecund hothouse of Massachusetts politics, where political bona fides are measured not in years but in generations, Kerry was never perceived to be a pol, and the pols resented him. Hence every time John Kerry wins an election he's not supposed to win—especially the one in 1996, when he came back from eight points down in August to win reelection to the Senate, sending popular Republican governor William Weld spinning all the way into a midlife crisis—the assembled wiseguys always wonder how he's managed to put it over on them again.

Now Kerry's the one up at the podium, delivering a laugh line that gets what can charitably be described as a this-guy-might-be-able-to-make-me-an-ambassador-one-day reaction. There's a kind of sag in the pressroom at this. However, I've gone back twenty years, back up on the bluffs in Falmouth, and the day is waning, and Greeley is trying to get John Kerry back on the campaign trail so Kerry can get elected lieutenant governor and, therefore, one day be in position to get elected president of the United States.

Kerry's not moving. He has another story to tell, and he tells it very well, with a little dip of his head so you realize that he's his own punch line. I lean in to talk to Greeley. "How come *this* guy never runs for anything?" I ask. Greeley gives me the kind of grin that you get when you work in politics in the Commonwealth. Outside, without any of us noticing, the ocean goes black in the long fade of the evening.

"The hell with it," John Kerry says. "Let's get another beer."

"It's **been an eye-opening** experience to me in a lot of ways," says the candidate in the way that candidates say things. "Just the reality of people's lives right now in America that I don't think a lot of people in Washington are aware of—how tough a lot of people are as they fight big problems every single day, and how they do it as the system seems to get more unfair every single day."

He's always looked a bit like an Ent, one of Tolkien's long-jawed, slow-talking tree creatures. His face is now more set in its sharp angles and down-running planes, and it better suits the depth of his voice and the way that his thoughts tend to wind around one another into extended, nuanced answers that are the bane of anyone who makes a business of sound bites. Now, glancing out the window of the campaign plane, he seems fully formed, as though something finally has set that took God's own sweet time about it.

"I've learned that what I'm doing now requires a precision on my part about what I say, and that's part of the learning experience of any campaign," he says. "I will be disciplined."

Yet sometimes, even within the most conventional moments of a conventional enterprise like a presidential campaign, which is now as ritualized as a high pontifical Mass and not half as many laughs, Kerry can take any moment by surprise. On an MTV special, Kerry is asked if he is now or ever was cool. He does not staff out the answer. He doesn't draw it from Machiavelli or de Tocqueville but, rather, rings a true change on the gospel according to Duke Ellington.

"If I were cool," he explains, "if I told you I was cool, then I wouldn't be cool."

He'll turn up with a football out on the tarmac, and the surprise is not that he does so but that he throws a perfect spiral, thumb rotating down counterclockwise the way they showed you in the old Johnny Unitas videos. He'll wander back through the plane and talk about sailing or about the right kind of hiking boots, and these are easy moments when you realize that, for all the wonkish camouflage he can throw up, while there may be a few finer minds than Kerry's in politics, there are none more purely discursive. (After all, how many politicians can boast a campaign biography whose index includes both Elmo Zumwalt and Warren Zevon, or has the Paris Peace Talks listed right after the bass player from Mountain?)

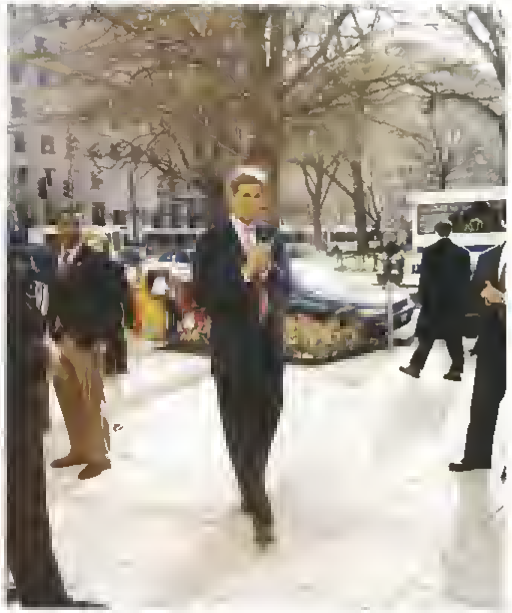
He calls people "man" more often than any politician since Adam Clayton Powell, and a handshake with him can be an adventure not unlike meeting a fellow Masoo for the first time. Thumb up or thumb down? Straight-ahead grip or soul shake? The guitar comes with him on the plane, which happens to be one that once transported the Rolling Stones, with floor-to-ceiling mirrors in the bathrooms, a wet bar in the center of the cabin, and residue of God alone knows what on the seats.

Kerry ran in those circles once. Back in 1971, he was photographed with John Lennon, which was cool, and spoke to mass demonstrations on the National Mall, which was also cool, and argued against his own war passionately on television. Kerry's face was young and angular then, while his voice was plummy and wise, and he appeared to be a set of handsome yet mismatched parts. He was in that passionate moment, but he also was looking down the road further than were a lot of people who were sharing the great platform with him.

But he's always on the outside of things. The signature image in Douglas Brinkley's hagiographic account of Kerry's early life and service in Vietnam is that of twelve-year-old John Kerry, son of a career diplomat, riding his bicycle through the bombed-out streets of a ruined Germany. Even in the 1970s, he steered by his own star. He was impatient with the revolution-for-the-hell-of-it crowd and with the wilder elements in his own organization, the Vietnam Veterans Against the War. The triviality of the Abbie Hoffman end of the antiwar movement offended his intellect, and to this day, he bites off his words so sharply when he talks about them that it's plain he still considers them largely a waste of time.

Kerry wanted a career in politics, which was decidedly not cool at the time. In fact, the first people ever to call Kerry a political opportunist were members of the antiwar Left. Meanwhile, as the years went by and the passions faded, politics never seemed totally to want him. Occasionally, he even seemed outside his own biography. He was the war hero who fought for peace, the reform liberal who went off to put the bad guys in jail. He dug into policy, and he so developed that cerebral part of him that distrusts the simple solution and the easy answer that his political career became dissonant with its origins—far removed from that simple knife-edge of a question that cut through the domestic fog of a foreign war.

And that's what was killing him last fall, when passion inflamed the campaign. In a sprawling Democratic field, Kerry began the race as a talking resume in a year that seemed to demand an Old Testament prophet, touched by the kind of fire in which he'd once walked. It turned around for him, spectacularly, in Iowa. He found his way back into his own life



HOW MANY POLITICIANS CAN BOAST a campaign biography whose index includes both Elmo Zumwalt and Warren Zevon, or has the Paris Peace Talks listed right [illegible] Tom Morello? [illegible]

again. He gave himself permission to be cool.

"People are looking for leadership that isn't cynical," he says, the hum at the back of the crowded plane growing louder. "They want to talk about great common interests and the kind of leadership that's willing to reach for it."

All right, so he's not there yet. He's been out trying to recapture the poetry of politics—the way he had it that day in the Senate hearing room and the way it lived in him on the National Mall in Washington. It appears now in startling bursts, with groups of small children and in the ferocious loyalty he summons from disparate people—from smooth government lawyers as easily as from the men with whom he fought the war. He chased it all over Iowa when the poetry seemed to belong to other people until it sat there, amazingly, in his hand.

He **looked so surprised** last winter, working his way through the small towns of New Hampshire after Iowa had turned it around for him, stomping into the fire station in his clunky brown coat and open-necked shirt—both of which, while informal, were not inexpensive—and suddenly, they didn't need just the fire station, they needed the school cafeteria behind it, because John Kerry was coming to town. People waited patiently in the firehouse and in the cafeteria, watching C-SPAN, of all things.

He didn't wind any stems the way Howard Dean was winding them, and he didn't burn any barns the way John Edwards was burning them. But he showed up, everywhere, and he played every tune on the Democratic-party piano for them, and they stood and cheered, and it always caught him by surprise. And what had seemed like aloofness his entire career softened into something like diffidence.

And he talked to everyone. He spoke to the people in the fire station, and he spoke to the people in the cafeteria out back. He shook every hand. He complimented the chili in a way that (quite frankly) the chili didn't deserve, and it did not elude people in either hall that there was something about all of those moments that looked something very much like gratitude.

Tip O'Neill was imprecise. All politics are not local. All politics are tribal, and the first rule of tribal politics was Always Say Thank You. It was politics in which people felt they had an investment, that they were involved even in the crooked parts, that it belonged to them and, therefore, so did the government it produced. It belonged to them—it *owed* them—and it should thank them.

It's the politics I imbibed in my youth, my grandfather telling me how he'd scooted down a fire escape one night when the opposition discovered that he'd been monitoring a strategy session in the next room through the medium of a drinking glass held up to the wall. It's the politics best explained by Frank Skeffington, the central figure in *The Last Hurrah*, a character drawn so closely from the life of Boston's legendary James Michael Curley that, by his declining years, Curley had rendered himself indistinguishable from his fictional persona.

"I'm not just an elected official," says Skeffington to his nephew. "I'm a tribal chieftain as well."

It's the politics of the freighted wink, the pregnant nod, and "It's all about being a pol, a dealmaker, and I can explain it to people from, say, Chicago or New Orleans or even parts of New York, but only in the way that people who speak French can also manage to connect in Italian or Spanish." And it's a politics that was dying when John Kerry came home to Massachusetts.

In 1969 Ron Rosenblith had been hired up at the state legislature by an old hand named Mossy Donahue. Rosenblith was young, idealistic, and full of the spirit of the times, and he found himself working in a stagnant, backslapping political culture, a place of fifty-dollar-a-plate "times" at which everybody drank too much, ate too much, and called one another "Cousin," or, more familiarly, "Cuz," and it was completely oblivious to the issues roiling the streets beyond the great golden dome of the statehouse.

"There was a significant cultural change in the political community," Rosenblith recalls. "The intensity and the passions of that time were really at odds with that culture."

The war killed the pols. Or, more precisely, the movement against the war did, and so did the campaign for civil rights. They merged in Massachusetts with an older impulse for institutional reform and produced a generation of leaders dedicated to the end of the old order. The movement changed the culture of the state's government, reducing somewhat the hereditary nature

PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRIS BUCK

of the state's road crews and eliminating from ir most of the people named Mossy In their place came people like Barney Frank, Paul Tsongas, Michael Dukakis, and, eventually, John Kerry

"People felt burned," Kerry recalls "A lot of our efforts were about openness and empowerment and accountability because a lot of us had faced the opposite of those things in its extremes."

Still, most of the new guys paid the old dues Frank began his career as a mayoral aide in Boston and then became a state legislator, as Dukakis had before him Tsongas was a county commissioner rising far above an office that exists as British colonial rule s most lasting contribution to contemporary political chicanery They were able to channel their reform impulses into what was left of the previous political structure They became pols in new ways And they were successful at it. Both Dukakis and Tsongas eventually ran for president, and Frank is now one of the most influential members of the House, where a number of the old forms still obtain

Kerry was different He came back to the state as a full-blown celebrity and he shopped for a congressional district. However, in 1970 the nascent liberal political-reform movement boosted antiwar Jesuit Robert Drinan instead of Kerry for one seat, and Kerry campaigned vigorously on Drinan's behalf Kerry briefly moved to Worcester—my hometown—for a run against Harold Donohue, a superannuated New Dealer most famous for appearing to doze during the House Judiciary Committee's hearings on whether to impeach Richard Nixon Donohue was some sort of fourth cousin to my mother, which meant a card every orher Christmas thanking us for sending Cousin Harold back to Washington for another two-year nap

Finally, in 1972 Kerry went for the Fifth Congressional District, which runs north of Boston toward New Hampshire and which includes the city of Lowell, where Kerry and his then-wife, Julia Thorne, took an apartment in order to establish residence He then got tangled in a congressional campaign that was strange even by the baroque standards of the Commonwealth

Lashed as an opportunistic carpetbagger (and worse) by the Lowell *Sun*, the local newspaper run by a notorious crank named Clem Costello Kerry nevertheless beat a pair of local favorites in the Democratic primary, which was enlivened by an episode in which Kerry s brother, Cameron, and another Kerry aide were arrested in the basement of the building that housed not only Kerry's headquarters but that of one of his rivals as well The *Sun* accused the Kerry campaign of a Watergate-style moment, and the Kerry campaign responded by blaming the whole thing on the actual Watergate conspirators—the operatives in the Nixon White House who d been tracking Kerry ever since his emergence as an antiwar spokesman in 1971

Kerry moved into the general election against Republican Paul Cronin and a third-party candidate named Roger Durkin The *Sun* opened up on him almost daily Then, four days before the election, Durkin, who'd been much harder on Kerry than the Republican Cronin had been, bailed out of the race and endorsed Cronin. Kerry's support collapsed and he lost every bit of what had once been a twenty-six-point lead It had been a weird, dirty campaign Only a pol could appreciate the art of it.

So Vietnam wasn't enough His medals and his countercultural cachet combined weren't enough to beat one grumpy old man and his newspaper As the airplane banks steeply over the undifferentiated farmlands of southern Illinois it's fairly apparent that Kerry wasn't expecting Clem Costello's name to be cited in this particular context But the great agitation of a presidential campaign is liable to bring all kinds of things to the surface, and this campaign is shaping up to be the most agitated one in nearly thirty years

Since his fortunes turned around, Kerry's had the full attention of the opposition He's been derided as French looking, which is surely an epithet if not a wholly exact one (Does he look like Gérard Depardieu? Charles de Gaulle? Lafayette? Catherine Deneuve?) He s weathered the Drudgery about the intern-who-wasn t-an intern. A butchered quote about leaders elsewhere who might support him has taken Kerry too long to explain. In an act of hypocrisy so breathtaking that it passeth all understanding, a Bush campaign spokesman has criticized Kerry for making use of a Bible verse in a speech, while another dismissed Kerry's Vietnam service with "yadda-yadda-yadda' — which, if you're keeping score at home, comes to just under twenty thousand dead American men per *yadda*

And now *Time* magazine is waiting back in the main cabin to talk to him about whether or not he can simultaneously be a good Catholic and a good president, a question that everyone thought Jack Kennedy had settled back in 1960. Nothing is so trivial as to be unimportant. The spirit of Clem Costello—if not his actual self—now stalks a bigger stage.

"I think, by and large, the press has been fair," Kerry muses "Except for the rumor traffickers '

It has escaped nobody s notice that it was a Massachusetts reform liberal who d made "smart and tough" an oxymoron in Democratic presidential politics In 1978, then-governor Michael Dukakis lost reelection in the primary to a career hack named Edward King in large part because, as one of King's aides explained, "We put all the hate groups in one big pot and let it boil"

Ten years later, with a bigger budget and a wider audience and vastly higher stakes, Lee Atwater and Jim Baker did exactly the same thing and Dukakis collapsed again accomplishing the not inconsiderable feat of making the elder George Bush look like a cross between Wild Bill Hickok and Conan the Barbarian.

Now on a plane that will take him from Michigan to Missouri and thence to California, in a week in which the Republican counterattack has only begun, Kerry ponders whether or not he s facing Clem Costello with $190 million to spend and access to FBI files

' That's a very interesting question," he says looking out the window of the plane. Suddenly, his face sets, he looks back and it is not a face you want to see if you are a criminal defendant or a bureaucrat with something to hide.

"It's not going to happen this time "

After losing the congressional race, Kerry dropped out of electoral politics for nearly ten years paying the dues that his contemporaries had paid before they sought higher office He took a job as an assistant district attorney for Middlesex County and discovered within himself not only a gift for prosecution but a taste for it as well.

"I loved delivering justice," he says now "I loved putting the case together, the art of the trial itself There was a big sense of return for me I mean, when you have a rape victim there, seeing her assailant punished, that's real "

He was building not merely a career but a constituency, moving beyond his celebrity "The whole time we were there, John never talked about Vietnam" recalls William Codinha who worked with Kerry in the district attorney s office and subsequently, in the Senate as well "We spent hours together, and that was an area that he didn t talk [*continued on page* 156]

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SUMMER!

...is so close we can almost taste it

INSIDE >> AN HOMAGE TO THE HOT SEASON, WITH ADORING COVERAGE OF monster tomatoes • big-ass bass • lawn care • back hair • cockfights • corn bread • fireworks • festivals • dawgs • frogs • the six best food roads in America • the seven best books for the beach • and finally, Carmen Electra in very little clothing

PHOTOGRAPH BY SEAN MURPHY

SUMMER DRIVIN' & EATIN'

Ventura Boulevard

BY SCOTT RAAB

VENTURA CUTS A SIXTEEN-MILE east-west swath through the heart of the vast suburb called the San Fernando Valley—which, unlike the rest of the city of Los Angeles actually *has* a heart. El Lay s haute and niche don't come here—speak the digits of the Valley's area code, 818, and they ll recoil in fear—but even for the million-plus decamped upon these unhip flats heat-sealed by the Santa Monica Mountains and unkissed by the ocean breeze Ventura is less a flowing artery than a stutter-step gantlet of stop-lights and left-turn signals, the shortest distance between strip malls, an everyday pain in the ass

Yet I've always kept e warm spot in my heart for the Valley—I lived here, briefly, es e little boy, back when much of it was still ranchland—and I never visit L A without driving down Ventura Boulevard to scarf a bunch of crap food

I mean crap food in the best possible sense, of course. Oh, you can find fine sushi on Ventura Boulevard—and good Mexican, Chinese, French, and fusion—but what I'm talking about are real Valley victuals the car-culture, pavement-and-palm-trees grub you went while getting your Kia washed and waxed, the most comfy of comfort foods, the stuff you stuff in your pie hole when nobody s looking or you're past caring what anyone else thinks, just because it tastes so goddamn good.

I'm talking, first of all, about hot dogs. Have you ever *seen* e hot dog Homes? I mean e big dog, flecked with red pepper and drenched with butt-honking trim—your runny cheese, your chili, your sauer-kraut Heve you ever *really* seen a two-fisted, bun-busting, five-napkin dawg? You'll find half a dozen worthy versions on Ventura The best banger is the spicy Polish sausage at the WIENER FACTORY huge and fiery and, particularly when topped with red cebbage end cheese, one puissant laxative And don't dare miss the eir fries, perfect thin-cut beauties best dressed sparingly, with grease and a sprinkling of salt.

Other dogs of note along Ventura mclude RUBIN S RED HOT CUPID S—where, frankly, the burgers and fries are better than the tube steaks, but the place has been here since 1946, the Tarzane Car Wash is right next door, and the prices are dirt cheap—and, in e category all its own, the kosher knockwurst plate at CHILI MY SOUL where the buns are beautifully toasted, the platter is served with fork and knife, and the devotion to chili is as cult-ish as it oughta be. Of Chili My Soul's thirty-three chili blends, only ten are violated by the mclusion of beans.

If you're hankering for a fleshed-out Ventura Boulevard dinner, try the fried pork chunks at VERSAILLES, an island of Cuban delights, served with fried sweet plantains, rice, and black beans. A side of stuffed yucca drenched in the house garlic sauce, a co-conut or papaya shake, the Cuban flan—or, if you're feeling lusty, guave shells *con* cream cheese—for dessert *mmmmm*, baby! Or head to MR CECIL S CALIFORNIA RIBS where the Cajun hot links, corn bread, and racks of baby backs are fucking exemplary

No voyage down Ventura can be considered complete without breakfast at BOBBY S a nondescript coffee shop full of truckers where the standerd side of bacon is six thick slabs, the hash browns on your plate are the size of an Indian burial mound and the wartresses are as salty as e slice of Taylor ham "You come in to see the circus, too?" mine said when I settled at the counter "I really beheve there's gonna be a murder in here some day."

Over et JERRY S FAMOUS DELI—there are three Jerry's locations on Venture try the one in Woodland Hills, because that s where you stend the best chance of breeking bad with Sandy Raab, my dad, the large man In the stained T-shirt who teught me how to gorge myself—they steam the hot dogs, but I'd go with the chopped liver, the kishke, end if, God help you, you've still got room the Reuben Just to show that even in California, you can ftess like e real Jew

Ah, what's this, just across from the Ventura West Hand Wash? BIG MAMA S KITCHEN? Creole soul food? In the Valley? Yo. Catfish fried up crisp hot collards and dirty rice, peach cobbler with a scoop of vanilla, sweet lemonade What's not to like?

Our last stop is the oddest THE DIP, e converted Ventura hot-dog stand hard by the Casa de Cadillec dealership and the Handy J car wash The menu, bolted to the sunwashed wall, consists of six sandwiches—pork shoulder, pestraml, turkey, roast beef, pot roast, and lamb, all slow-cooked and tender as a surfer girl's heart—each stacked high on e soft roll the whole blessed affair drenched in warm meat juice. You can order 'em dipped, double-dipped, or submerged One word *geschmack* And one more: *angioplasty*

1) MR. CECIL'S CALIFORNIA RIBS
13625 Ventura Boulevard, Sherman Oaks; 818-905-8400
• • • •

2) THE DIP
14333 Ventura Boulevard, Sherman Oaks; 818-501-1850.
• • • •

3) WIENER FACTORY
14017 Ventura Boulevard, Sherman Oaks; 818-789-2976.
• • • •

4) RUBIN'S RED HOT
15322 Ventura Boulevard, Sherman Oaks; 818-905-6515.
• • • •

5) CHILI MY SOUL
4628 Balboa Boulevard (corner of Ventura), Encino; 818-981-7685.

6) VERSAILLES
17410 Ventura Boulevard, Encino; 818-905-0750.
• • • •

7) CUPID'S (next to Tarzana Car Wash)
19348 Ventura Boulevard, Tarzana; 818-345-2608
• • • •

8) JERRY'S FAMOUS DELI
21857 Ventura Boulevard, Woodland Hills; 818-340-0810.
• • • •

9) BIG MAMA'S KITCHEN
22526 Ventura Boulevard, Woodland Hills; 818-222-1257.
• • • •

10) BOBBY'S COFFEE SHOP
22821 Ventura Boulevard, Woodland Hills; 818-225-1324

LOCAL KNOWLEDGE WHAT TO DO BETWEEN MEALS

• Rumo pho Russell H... olayed Moe Greene in a little film called *The Godfather*

Alex Rocco, actor

FOR THREE DECADES Alex Rocco hes lived end loved along Ventura, raised e family end even become semifemous You can still find him there, holding court et the **Sportsmen's Lodge Hotel** (slhotel com) For every long-legged beauty from Nebraska who mekes it In Hollywood there s one who s forced to sling hesh on Ventura and a good number of them congregate eround the Sportsmen s pool But before you get eny ideas Rocco suggests you stop by the hotel bar where "Cyrano" Joe dispenses wisdom end writes poems for his favorite customers to give to women That s how Rocco charmed his current lady e tango dancer with "a drop-dead body," who often drags him out to **El Encuentro Tango Bar** (818-758-9167) or to rummage through the stalls at the **Shermen Oeks Antique Mall** (818-906-0338) Mostly though you'll find Rocco In the coffee shop of the Sportsmen's Lodge hanging with friends and asking e group of Jepenese tourists "Do you know who I am? I'm Moe Greene. I made my bones when you were going out with cheerleaders." —BRYAN MEALER

Illustrations by ANTHONY FREDA

SIGN ICONS BY MARK HATCHO

Oregon's Route 101

BY CHRIS JONES

HERE'S ALL YOU NEED to know about Oregon. Even its plants eat meat. ¶ So you've been warned. Francis. This is not California's Route 101. It's not about cherry-red convertibles and big glass houses on the cliffs. It's not about wearing cashmere and singing Joan Baez around the bonfire or snapping pics of John Steinbeck's big bronze head in Monterey and calling it culture. It's not about straight white teeth or suntans or dropping four bills on a round of golf or painting gray bridges red to spruce them up. And it sure as hell isn't about coming back from Pilates and sitting down, cross-legged, to a plate of seaweed. Out here, when the locals turn to the ocean for lunch, they're bringing back flesh. Tuna, probably. Or maybe oysters. Or scallops the size of Steinbeck's big bronze head. The kelp they leave to the tides, because you read it here, and you read it right. Even the plants ain't having it.

Darlingtonia californica. That's its name, a beautiful fraud just like the rest of it, from its root system on up. Because these pretty beasts, growing shoulder to shoulder in a protected patch of rain forest north of Florence, are stone-cold killers. (So are the plates of Mexican food at the nearby **BEACHCOMBER TAVERN**, hut in a good, Jesus wept kind of way. The Green Donkey burrito, stuffed with beef, beans, cheese, whole green chile, jalapenos, sour cream, and hot sauce, is enough to make a grown man cry, mostly out his anus.) Anyway, these particular carnivorous plants lure insects with their bright blooms and the promise of nectar. Then they trap their prey in a tube filled with sticky hairs, drown them, and roll them in bacteria until there's nothing left but nitrogen.

The plants, the roadside signs will tell you, were out here first. But everything and everyone that's followed them to this monster-truck-and-shotgun coast agrees that *Darlingtonia* was on to something good. Namely, meat.

At the **SHIP INN** in Astoria, a gritty little river town that feels as though it once had grander ambitions, they dish out deep-fried prawns, butterflied into rings the size of halos. The folks at **PIRATE'S COVE** in nearby Garibaldi drag great fat oysters fresh out of the bay and boil them in a secret-recipe stew. (Don't even think of looking at it. Just eat it.) **LEROY'S BLUE WHALE** in Yachats pulls the same trick on clams, dunking them in a thick, fortifying chowder topped with paprika and butter, which passes for a side in these parts.

It's just that a rugged country demands rugged feeds. Walk into almost any bar-grill or roadhouse and you'll be flanked by loners and misfits who pull crab pots, fell trees, or drive long-haul trucks for a roughneck living. And when they come in from the rain to eat, they're not looking for nouveau cuisine, and they're not looking for Mama's greens. They're looking to get full and, if the winds are howling, to get warm in the belly. That's it. Which is why the most common accompaniment for meat out here is more meat, usually presented in some delicious, meatier form, and why, if you're the sort of man who picks the parsley off his plate, you're in for some kind of luck in Oregon.

In working towns like Newport, especially. Passing through this, the largest commercial-fishing port in the union's widest-backed state, is like returning to some forgotten age when harbors still had boats and hadn't all been turned into theme parks and ballyards. Completing the time warp is **GINO'S SEAFOOD & DELI**. There are free newspapers stacked on the bleach-white counter and, better yet, the ten-buck crab sandwich weighs more than most newborn babies.

1) **HOME SPIRIT BAKERY CAFE**
2845 Marine Drive, Astoria; 503-325-4631.
The only things fresher than the girls behind the counter are the fritters.

2) **THE SHIP INN**
1 Second Street, Astoria; 503-325-0033.

3) **PIRATE'S COVE**
14170 Highway 101 North, Garibaldi; 503-322-2092.

4) **TILLAMOOK CHEESE**
4175 Highway 101 North, Tillamook; 503-815-1300.
Your source for all dairy-fixes. Try the peanut-butter-and-chocolate ice cream on a sugar cone.

5) **BLACKFISH CAFÉ**
2733 NW Highway 101, Lincoln City; 541-996-1007

6) **GINO'S SEAFOOD & DELI**
808 SW Bay Boulevard, Newport; 541-265-2424.

7) **LIGHTHOUSE DELI & FISH COMPANY**
3640 SW Highway 101, South Beach; 541-867-6800.

8) **LEROY'S BLUE WHALE**
580 Highway 101, Yachats; 541-547-3399

9) **BEACHCOMBER TAVERN**
1355 Bay Street, Florence; 541-997-6357

Just to make sure you leave stuffed to the gills, Gino garnishes his bad boy with two hunks of unsullied crabmeat, which he pins to his masterpiece with toothpicks. Need more? There are chips in the fryer, bottles of malt vinegar on the tables, and whole lemons on the counter for fifty cents. Weathered regulars might look at you funny if you're not dying of scurvy and still drop four bits for a piece of fruit, but none of 'em will blame you for wondering aloud why everything can't be this way again.

If you're man enough—the preface to every other sentence uttered on the Oregon coast—you'll stop again just over the old, arching concrete-and-steel bridge that spans adjacent Yaquina Bay. The **LIGHTHOUSE DELI & FISH COMPANY** looks like a shanty, but its heart is anchor-tattoo majestic. It also happens to harbor the best fish and chips this side of the world. The local snapper—fresh-caught—is a slab of pure white meat that'd put the best pork to shame folded into a thin tempura batter spiked with garlic. Straight up, it's some damn tasty fish.

And last, to fill the space you'd otherwise reserve for the meat sleeps, hit the **BLACKFISH CAFE** in Lincoln City owned by a genuine chef, Rob Pounding. The dude knows his seafood, but not in that tonight-we-have-a-pickle-up-our-ass kind of way. It's more in that tonight-we-have-three-kinds-of-horny-making-oysters kind of way. Puget Sound Olympians, Yaquina Bay Petites, and Hammersley Bay Smalls. Each makes one hell of a nightcap, served up by a staff that's hand-on-your-shoulder friendly. More important, they're laid out in Oregon portions, which, by some ancient state law, must be large enough to satisfy a couple hundred acres of *Darlingtonia californica*.

They're waiting for you down the road, by the way, whenever you're ready to pay homage, compare appetites, or feed them Joan Baez.

Whenever you're man enough, that is.

LOCAL KNOWLEDGE: WHAT TO DO BETWEEN MEALS

Gracie Strom, proprietor Gracie's Sea Hag Inn

Gracie's husband at the gyro. All women wanted him, but I got him.

DOWN IN DEPOE BAY, everybody's loved ol' Gracie for forty years now. Once, while campaigning for a seat on the local sewer board, she drove around in a Lincoln Continental and offered to trade chowder for votes. She won by a landslide. When she's not tending bar or rigging elections, you might find Gracie and her new husband (they met at the YMCA) just outside the Sea Hag, watching the **spouting horns**—giant ocean geysers—shoot two hundred feet into the salty air. Gracie's pals at **Dockside Charters** (docksidedepoebay.com), two doors down, take folks out to watch gray whales in an inflatable Zodiac pontoon, often coming so close you can touch them. On weekends, Gracie hikes to head to **Newport,** where along the beach you can hunt for the blue-green glass balls—used by Japanese fishermen to float their nets—that have washed ashore from across the Pacific. By cocktail hour, though, you'll want to join Gracie—whom they call the Princess Di of Depoe Bay—singing, booty-shaking, and playing the empty whiskey bottles at the **Sea Hag** (graciesliving.com). "I get a lot of requests," she says. Her current favorite? "YMCA." —BRYAN MEALER

CARMEN SAYS... "I like a guy who takes care of himself. A manicure is nice, and always, always take care of the feet."

CARMEN SAYS... "I love Popsicles. I can remember as a kid it would be so hot that I could never get enough of them. But a snow cone, well, I think they're overrated. They always look better than they really are. They just don't deliver like a Popsicle."

A fling with Carmen Electra

THE SUN SHOOTS HUGE COLUMNS OF LIGHT across the room, directly into the eyes of Carmen Electra, and I am trying hard to get a look into them. We are knee to knee, on the floor, superclose. Our heads are almost touching. These are the warm, electric minutes before twilight in L. A. Her husband will be back from work soon. I want her to look into my eyes, too, to stare right back at me, but she won't. ¶ "Go," she says, pointing to the pile of cards. I linger, holding one finger on top of the pile and looking over the board. I am doing well. It must be... [BY TOM CHIARELLA / PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAMES WHITE]

annoying to have me slow-play a game of Sorry!, but I am kicking Carmen Electra's ass. I'm doing my best not to rub it in.

"Go, go, go,' she says.

My next card says 4. Move backward 4.

She humphs, glad to see my luck turn, before taking a card. In Sorry!, I've told her, there is always hope. She's been concentrating as we play, but sometimes we pause so I can ask her about the various epochs in her much-traveled life. Every time she appears on television—as Prince's pop prodigy, as a bouncing *Baywatch* lifeguard, as (briefly) Dennis Rodman's wife, and more recently with husband Dave Navarro on *'Til Death Do Us Part*—it seems to be a completely new incarnation. Not exactly model, not exactly actress, not exactly performer. "I think I'm more of a personality," she gladly admits, as if that were as normal as a nickel. "That's what I wanted. I wanted to create this image. Of course, I evolve from year to year. But I take responsibility for"—she suddenly shoots her arm out, palm up, card in hand—"for this!"

"Twelve!" she says, sliding her pawn urgently forward, right to the board so there is an audible smooth hiss, and finishing on a space formerly occupied by me. She nods with satisfaction as she flicks my piece off the board, flourishing the move with her very own sound effect.

"Sha-donk!" she says, laughing.

Sha-donk?

She squints and points her tiny finger at me, jabbing it lightly in my arm. *"Pe-tat-tat!* You know. Bam! I got you."

I look down at the board. She drums her fingernails on the coffee table and leans closer. She's slowed my momentum to be sure, but I still have two pawns home and another close. "I got you," I say. "I'm still good here."

She reaches across the table for a piece of sashimi as I pull a card. She's wearing a jean jacket over a sleeveless top, even though it's plenty warm. She's got on three-inch heels, even though we're sitting on the floor. I can't tell if she doesn't know how to relax or if she just got too caught up in the game to change. Or maybe I just give her the creeps.

But she is warm and alive and right next to me, her tiny hand pressed to the floor next to my knee. I brought the board game. It was my idea. I didn't realize it would be this physical. I'm an idiot. At this late juncture, I realize I could have brought Twister. She dips the slice of salmon in the spicy mayonnaise and slips it between her lips delicately.

As she chews, she presses her chin forward and gestures toward my hand. Whachagot? Then I remember to look at my card: 3. Move forward 3.

"Sha-donk that," I say.

She squints and shakes her head. "You only go *sha-donk* when you do something, something real, when you're really hurting the other guy."

She flips a card: 7. Move forward 7 or split the move between two pawns.

She looks over the board and smiles, her most heartfelt smile yet, the face of a woman who can't help but feel good. "Like this," she says, clipping off four moves to trash another of my pawns, then moving another three spaces to land on the yellow triangle that lets her slide four more spaces for free. "That," she says, "is a *sha-donk*."

I flip over my next card, another pedestrian 3. "You have to make up your own sounds," Carmen explains. "You have to have your own language for how to lay it on." She hits another big card, presses another pawn closer to home.

I can see that I am suddenly doomed. In two swift moves, Carmen Electra has stolen the game. She runs her hands through her hair and shakes it out. "Come on,' she says. "Play."

I reach for my own piece of sushi. The hell with her. "Don't worry, Electra. I'll beat you. I'll *sha-donk* you all night long."

She snorts. Preposterous. She taps the board, hurrying me to my demise. That's when I want to pause, to remind her what I told her earlier, that no matter what, there is always hope. ■

CARMEN SAYS... "The best summer date isn't the beach. The sand gets everywhere. There's no way to really get comfortable. I'd rather go to Magic Mountain. Besides, I'm not all that good a swimmer."

The Skills of Summer (Part 1)

>HOW TO BEGIN A BARBECUE

Cut two Hebrew National salamis into half-inch-thick slabs. Throw slabs on hot grill, five minutes a side. Skewer with tooth picks, dip in deli mustard. Bon appétit!

>HOW TO REPEL MOSQUITOES

OUR EXPERT: ANN LOVEJOY, GARDENING QUEEN AND AUTHOR

The ultimate scourge of any summer cookout? Not your brother-in-law after too much Jim Beam (though that may be horrible enough), but the dreaded mosquito. To show it you mean business, ditch the wussy citronella candles and get your hands on some catnip, as in the herb that sends your tabby into paroxysms of ecstasy. Its active ingredient, nepetalactone essential oil, is ten times more effective than deet, the industrial-strength compound in most repellents. Bonus: If you have an herb-loving cat, it'll be comfortably numb all summer.

Makes about three cups

2 cups catnip, stemmed

3 to 4 cups mild rice vinegar

Rinse catnip, roll lightly with a rolling pin, then place in a quart jar and soak with vinegar. Seal jar and store in a dark cupboard for two weeks, shaking jar lightly every day. Strain into a clean jar, seal, and refrigerate for up to a month. Unused. To use: spritz on exposed skin and around outdoor dining areas. —CHRIS TAYLOR

>HOW TO FEND OFF A SHARK ATTACK

OUR EXPERT: GEORGE BURGESS, DIRECTOR OF THE FLORIDA MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY'S INTERNATIONAL SHARK ATTACK FILE

Like all predators, sharks respect power and strength. So if one is coming at you, pop it on the nose. The shark will likely turn away. But don't get all cocky, Sugar Ray. It may very well come back, and each time it will get bolder and less intimidated by your pathetic jabs. So, what if you suddenly find yourself in the jaws of Jaws? Fight dirty. Poke him in a sensitive spot. Since his cajones are on the inside, your best bet is his eyes or gill openings, just behind the mouth. If you're lucky, he'll spit you out like a piece of gristle. —NOAH ROTHBAUM

>HOW TO SAFELY REMOVE YOUR MAN HAIR FOR THE BEACH

OUR EXPERT: KYAN DOUGLAS, THE GAY GROOMING GUY

You can hide that hide all winter, but now it's time to take action.

BACK: The choice is yours, O hirsute one. Feel the pain on your skin (waxing) or in your wallet (lasering). Our advice? Do what Brazilian farmers do with rain forests and burn it down. Laser removal is permanent and won't leave the tiny, pimplelike scars that waxing can.

CROTCH: This is do-it-yourself territory, but don't go wild with the Gillette. "Blue-boying" is only for porn stars. Try a beard trimmer to remove twigs and branches in your bush, while tapering it down to peach fuzz at the underwear line. The goal is a natural look. When you finally get her down there, you don't want her to think, This guy trims his pubic hair!

CHEST: You want some hair here, but if it's starting to look like Bob Marley's head, it's time to pull out the beard trimmer again. Just don't touch the treasure trail. —GERSH KUNTZMAN

>HOW TO GROW MONSTER TOMATOES

BY CAL FUSSMAN

You don't need a green thumb to grow tomatoes—just the capacity to love. One of the biggest mistakes you can make is not giving your partners enough space. After the last frost, plant your seeds or seedlings two to three feet apart in rows three to four feet apart. You want to dig down twelve inches and add compost, fertilizer, and nutrients. True love means ripe cow manure. Plant marigolds nearby; they repel insects that devour plants.

Caress each morning with water. An inch a week will do it. Do not splash your plants from overhead. Soil may kick up and cause some funky fungus.

A full sun will take care of the rest. Before your plants begin to soar, tie each to a stake for support. They will swiftly become fruitful (botanically, the tomato is a fruit) and multiply.

Never ever tug a tomato off the vine. You'll know a tomato is ripe when it falls off with the softest of twists.

Now top a slice of your garden tomato with a large basil leaf and a sliver of mozzarella. Lift it to your lips. The more love you've put in, the better it will taste.

>HOW TO LAND THE BIG ONE

OUR EXPERT: MIKE IACONELLI, 2003 BASSMASTER CLASSIC CHAMP

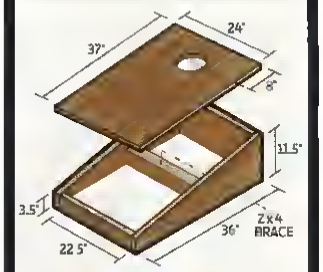
Everyone everywhere claims to have had the Big One on the line. Then, like WMD, they never actually turn up. But Mike Iaconelli actually reeled it in, a ten-pound-thirteen-ouncer, which is like the Warren Sapp of the bass world. His advice to amateur Captain Ahabs? It's all in the timing.

Dawn is for chumps. Huge fish that have lived a long time are very smart and very wary. That means they're most susceptible at no-light conditions—not only at dawn, like most weekend warriors think.

Fish prefrontal. If the weatherman tells you a cold front is on the way, the day before it hits is your best opportunity. Fish instinctively know what's coming and feed before the temperature drops.

Follow the sax drive. February through June is the time when even the cagiest fish come up shallow to spawn. Think of it as Spring Break for the aquatic world. Bass gone wild! —C.T.

HOW TO PLAY BEANBAG TOSS



OUR EXPERT: DON FLOOD, RETIRED ENGINEER AND BUILDER OF BEANBAG BOXES

1. Make two sloped boxes (see above) out of half-inch plywood on the top and three-quarter-inch lumber on the sides, screwing and gluing all joints and seams. (Use the plastic lid from a large coffee can as a template for the hole on top.)
2. Buy eight twelve-ounce, six-inch-square beanbags. (Or make: using pinto beans and denim.)
3. Set the boxes twenty-one feet apart, front to front. (For the tape-measure-challenged: that's about seven paces.)
4. Form two teams of two.
5. Standing next to one box, you and an opponent toss four bags each at the opposite box, alternating throws. (Don's tip: Flatten the beanbag in your hand and go for a high arc—ten feet.)
6. Every bag you land on top of the box is worth one point. In the hole is three points. (Satisfying thump of a three-quarter-pound beanbag landing on a plywood-topped hollow box: priceless.) Scoring tosses by you and your opponent cancel each other out, and a bag in the hole negates any opponent's bags on top.
7. Next round: From the opposite box, the two other players throw at the box near you.
8. Continue rounds. The highest scoring team each round starts the next one.
9. In the event of rain, keep playing. (Don's tip: Put the bags in a Ziploc.)
10. First team to twenty-one points wins.
11. The exception: Get all four bags in the hole in any round and it's game over, man.

The Best of Summer Fifteen superlative things to experience before Labor Day. **Best Snorkeling in Appalachia:** The "Hillbilly Barrier Reef," a 100-yard, clear-water stretch of the Conasauga River in Tennessee's Cherokee National Forest. The snorkelin' hole is home to more than 20 species of fish, conasauganiver.net. **Best Summer Job:** Ice-cream-truck driver in Portland, Oregon. The Portland Ice Cream Company will rent you a truck; you keep a percentage of all sales. 503-286-5951. **Best Beach (Nude Division):** Mazo Beach, on the Wisconsin River near Mazomanie, Wisconsin. On busy days you'll find 300 people there, not all of them repulsive. drleisure.com/beaches.html. **Best Beach (Arctic Division):** A hidden, sandy stretch along Mendenhall Lake in Juneau, Alaska. Behind you, a waterfall cascades down from the Juneau Ice Field. 907-789-0097. **Best Mexican Breakfast Not in Mexico:** Las Manitas Avenue Cafe on Congress Avenue in Austin. Chorizo scrambled with eggs, refrieds, salsa verde, and fresh tortillas. Damn. 512-472-9357. **Best State Fair:** Iowa's fair celebrates its sesquicentennial this year, August 12 to 22, in Des Moines. Check out the cow made completely out of butter. iowastatefair.com. **Best Place to Have Sex on the Beach (the act, not the drink):** Backside Beach (where the boat doesn't let off) in Shackleford Banks, North Carolina. nps.gov/calo.

PHOTOGRAPH BY SEAN MURPHY

DIAGRAM: MCKIE LLC; PLANE: JOE ZEFF

SUMMER ❖ DRIVIN & EATIN

The Great River Road

BY TOM CHIARELLA

WHY IS IT that everyone accepts Mississippi as quirky and full of Deep South flavor—cue the Jew's harps, cut to the crossroads throw down a huge plate of crawfish—but no one appreciates the distinct funkiness of Wisconsin, a river state in its own right? Drive the Great River Road, which hugs the Big Muddy shoulder to shoulder for the lower half of the state, and you'll find some things you might expect—more white people, more cheese—and others that will surprise you secret vistas of the river gaining steam, and food, large and ripe in portion, served in glorious baskets slid across a bar as the evening sun ebbs and the fishermen trundle in. When you find yourself eating fried cheese curds and wondering why they haven't caught on elsewhere, well then, you've got the funk, haven't you?

The Great River Road is a throwback, twisting through forgotten towns—once fish camps and trading stations for trappers—wedged in the bluffs above the river, miles from the ever throbbing interstate. This is a region untouched by the skin of mass commerce that blankets the rest of the country You'll see no Taco Bell And no Arby's. No Cracker Barrel. Not even a half-assed Subway nestled inside an overly expansive BP station The food is distinctly local, cleanly unfranchised.

When you find yourself standing on the corner of Blackhawk and Main in a town called Prairie du Chien, choosing between Jim's Tavern and Bob's Tavern, you'll realize that it might as well be 1972 Truth is, in that spot, your best bet is to turn on your heels toward **PETE'S HAMBURGER STAND** a nondescript tin shack sitting on the main drag like a forgotten Porta-John Never mind appearances These burgers start out as meatballs, cooked on the grill with onions and water, and end up in your fist for less than three bucks The effect is a sort of higher-order White Castle that you can carry down the street to one of the many taverns to hook up with the requisite brew

Bars don't compete here so much as duplicate and complement one another, providing handy backups to the essential service of providing ample portions of wonderfully watery beer In Genoa **WHISKER'S OLDE TYME INN**, a remnant of river life in the 1800s represents the natural evolution of a saloon and a fish house. It's an odd sort of monument to the transitory quality of life on the upper Mississippi, featuring walls populated by large mounted fish caught by long forgotten fishermen and decorated with the rustic murals of a drifter named Alberto, who in 1930 traded his art for a room upstairs The specialty is catfish cheeks, which are well just that, the cheeks of catfish deep fried. If the thought of a large portion of a fish's face makes you queasy, not to worry Larger cheeks are thoughtfully pared down into bite-sized portions

Every town along this road has bars like this—often situated under long-closed hotels, generally decorated with a modest sign outside—where you could lose an hour, or several of your prime earning years from the look of some of the locals, falling into the wash of fish stories and random jukebox selections You know the drill Inside, life stands still while outside the river marches on. Somehow the two produce a cozy kind of limbo that defines the region But you don't dip into the gritty and faded **ALMA HOTEL**—its bar nestled sideways to the street, replete with tinny music, chipped Formica, locals watching soap operas and blipping their way through video slot machines—just for a look at a Springsteen song You come for the apple pie, which is the best along the route, served hot and without flourish

Driving the Great River Road is like listening to AM radio—crackling, intermittent, distinctly local The landscape is lush and oddly hilly The bluffs rise up, steep and surprising on one side, and every few miles there is an overlook or a parking area where you can stop for a look at some layer of river muscle The Mississippi converges with the St Croix River in Prescott and there's an actual beach along the St Croix, a woodland river with cold, clean water Even if this is where your trip ends push up the hill past the town for one last taste of broke-down Wisconsin funk. Look for the River Heights Motel and a tiny sign for the **WILLOWS CAFÉ** a little bistro set up in a converted office space Press past the lousy parking lot and ill-conceived entrance and you'll find a menu that features cool inventions like stuffed French toast and really fine beefy chèvre sandwiches for lunch

Sure, the table is small and the room once held file cabinets. But when the food comes, you'll find it unbearably good Look around You're in a broken-down motel. No there's no Delta blues in the background, but like all secrets of the river, and the Great River Road, people will discover this soon enough. Meanwhile, shut up and try the beer cheese soup, topped with popcorn Believe me there ain't nothing like this downriver

1) PETE'S HAMBURGER STAND
118 West Blackhawk Avenue, Prairie du Chien, 608-326-6653.
• • •
2) COACHES
634 South Marquette Road, Prairie du Chien, 608-326-8115.
The crisp potato pancake comes big as a baseball mitt, served oddly with real maple syrup. "Ignore the potato part," the waitress says, "We emphasize the pancake."
• • •
3) WHISKER'S OLDE TYME INN
530 Main Street, Genoa, 608-689-2652.
• • •
4) RUDY'S DRIVE-IN
1004 La Crosse Street, La Crosse, 608-782-2200.
American Graffiti—quality detail: Tangles of onion rings. Big, sloppy root-beer floats. Waitresses actually wearing skates
• • •
5) MR. D'S RESTAURANT AND BAKERY
1146 State Street, La Crosse, 608-784-6737.
The doughnuts are five inches across. Take that, Krispy Kreme.
• • •
6) THE HISTORIC TREMPEALEAU HOTEL
150 Main Street, Trempealeau, 608-534-6898
Summer nights on the patio with walnut burgers, live music, and the Mississippi creeping by.
• • •
7) ALMA HOTEL
201 North Main Street, Alma, 608-685-3380.
• • •
8) THE NELSON CHEESE FACTORY
Highway 35 South, Great River Road, Nelson, 715-673-4725.
Watch them whip the dairy into shape or sit with a sandwich and wine. Take some hard cheese home with you.
• • •
9) THE WILLOWS CAFÉ
1020 U S. Highway 10, Prescott, 715-262-6888


Salwey likes to drive up to Buena Vista Park in Alma where the road up the bluffs offers a thirty mile view.

LOCAL KNOWLEDGE ❖ WHAT TO DO BETWEEN MEALS

Kenny Salwey, swamp creature

FOR THREE DECADES, Kenny Salwey lived alone in wooden shacks in Whitman Swamp, a six-thousand-acre floodplain forest just off the Great River Road, eking out a living by trapping muskrats digging ginseng and selling catfish and carp to the local fish markets. "I cut my milk teeth on a canoe paddle and seasoned it with black boot-suckin' Mississippi mud," he'll tell you In the swamp, he froze and starved and eventually had to replace both of his knees It was hard living, and you can read about his adventures in his book, *The Last River Rat* (Voyageur Press) You can also meet the author in his new hometown of Alma and take one of his tours of **Whitman Swamp** (608-685-4858), where in June it's buzzing with kingfishers egrets, and a symphony of songbirds After the tour, he suggests you rent a houseboat on the **Great River Harbor** (608-248-2454), three miles south of Alma where the catfish and walleye bite all summer (tackle and fishing licenses **Main Channel Bait & Liquor**, 608-685-4336) and where a man can stay on the water a week, a month or, like the River Rat, until he's damn well ready to come out

—BRYAN MEALER

Louisiana's Highway 90

BY BUCKY McMAHON

HIGHWAY 90 across southern Louisiana is a hardworking, blue-collar road with a tough job to do, which is to get everything up out of the swamp and on display. It's a Noah's Ark of commerce with the Piggly Wiggly and Bubba's Brakes and Boudoin's Propane crowded cheek by jowl with Catholic churches and Quonset-hut casinos and everybody who ever lived lying in crypts beside the road because the ground's too wet to bury them. In stretches, it's plumber's-butt ugly and no apology. You want scenery, it's everywhere, just off the road, in the cypress swamps of Cajun country. God's country, they say, full of God's creatures—every one of them with a scientific name, a common name, and a recipe.

From Lake Charles to New Orleans, I'm aiming to eat low on the food chain but high on the hog, starting in the little town of Jennings, Boudin Capital of the Universe. At the **BOUDIN KING**, they sell five thousand pounds of sausage a week. The recipe dates back decades to the old Cormier-family grocery. As a boudin virgin, I was startled by the substantial, pallid link I carried back to my picnic bench. Sawed open carefully with my plastic knife, the sheathing revealed a fluffy mix of pork and long grain rice with subtle undertones of spices—something cloveish and nutmegy. A coupla splorts of Louisiana hot sauce and I was a boudin convert.

From the Capital of Pig to the Capital of Frog, Rayne. Cajuns call the bullfrog *ouaouaron*, a bit of onomatopoeia pronounced "wah-wah-rhon," as nasally as possible. At chef Roy Lyons's **FROG CITY**, I called for the frog-legs étouffee and fried frog legs. Now, I don't have the culinary authority—only the high school biology-class experience—to say they were a tad underdone. I asked my waitress if she served a lot of legs, and she said, "Mostly to the tourists, locals get enough frog at home." I felt like yodeling back in my best BeauSoleil-ese, "Darlin', I don' mind no raw wah-wah-rhon." But after a little more polite dissection, I ordered up a platter of crawfish boiled in the spices that have made chef Roy famous from here to Paris. Got into 'em up to my elbows, head suckin' and tail pickin' and dippin' in butter. Hot mudbugs and ice-cold beer. *C'est bon, mon frère.*

The college town of Lafayette has neglected to pick a totem critter, so I ordered more eclectically at the **BLUE DOG CAFÉ**, part owned by "Blue Dog" artist George Rodrigue and decorated a might obsessively with le Chien Bleu. That Friday night, the Dog's bustling crowd spilled into the lounge, where a jazz chanteuse crooned a smoky "Summertime." My appetizer of shrimp en brochette (fried shrimp and jalapeño peppers embraced by maplewood bacon) was rich, and my main course of Whiskey Bay flounder plumped with crab was good-lookin'. I hushed up and dug in.

No way after that flatfish could I do justice to the baseball-bat-sized baguettes still on offer that night at **RANDOL'S**, but I was drawn in all the same by the twenty-foot carved wooden alligator outside and the mournful cries of the Cajun singer inside. Plunked down at the bar, I had a shot of whiskey for a nightcap, and if I'd had ma cher-o-mo, I might've worked off some of that seafood feast swamp stompin' in the bustling *salle de danse*.

A short jaunt east, in the heart of the Breaux Bridge historic district (there didn't seem to be any other kind), **CAFÉ DES AMIS** is a little oasis of big-city bohemia, its airy, rough-hewn interior prettily funkified with art-brut metal sculptures and surrealist paintings. Continuing my reptiliphilia, I had turtle soup for starters—yellow-belly cooter in a meaty dark stock, served with a beaker of sherry to tune it up. Barbecue shrimp Pont Breaux style (heads on) came with a bib. These were worthy jumbos, the sauce pure creole voodoo. When I had reduced the lot to shells and sauce, my tastefully tattooed waitress asked if I wanted to keep my plate. Why? "To sop," she said.

East of Lafayette, Highway 90 swings south, crossing many a trackless swamp, down to the mythical town of Houma. At least I got pretty lost trying to find it. I finally found myself on a lonely stretch of blacktop beside Bayou Black. The restaurant's sign was burned out, but the lot was full. Inside **BAYOU DELIGHT**, it was family night. Big families of big people. I had the Cajun platter: fish, shrimp, frog, oysters, crawfish, and alligator—completing a reptile trifecta—served with a boudin ball. Everything fried, of course. Captain's wafers to crumble into your iceberg-lettuce salad. It took you back, cousin, to the 1950s at least.

I knew I couldn't top that, but I stopped anyway in Des Allemands (Catfish Capital of the Universe) for some boiled crab at **BADEAUX'S SEAFOOD RESTAURANT & BUFFET**. I got lucky: One of my blues was a female full of red coral, crab caviar. Just about any part of the crab you think you shouldn't eat somebody calls "a great delicacy." With a little Tabasco, I generally agree.

Beyond Badeaux's, Highway 90 widened, started looking less like the rough-and-ready conduit from swampville to swampville and more like the on ramp to New Orleans. I nearly drove past a colorful cluster of booths in a gravel lot. Known as the **SHRIMP LOT**, it's the wholesale source of all the bounty I'd been sampling. But no one was cooking except one old fellow in Phillip's Corner Market. I had the turkey neck, corn and potato box lunch for $2.50. Looking back—and with a turkey neck you easily can—I felt I'd come a long way along the food chain. Most important, I'd made new friends, and eaten them.

1) **BOUDIN KING**
906 West Division Street, Jennings; 337-824-6593

2) **CHEF ROY'S FROG CITY CAFÉ**
1131 Church Point Highway, Rayne; 337-334-7913.

3) **BLUE DOG CAFÉ**
1211 [illegible] Road, Lafayette; 337-237-0005

4) **RANDOL'S RESTAURANT**
3320 Kaliste Saloom Road, Lafayette; 337-981-2080.

5) **CAFÉ DES AMIS**
140 East Bridge Street, Breaux Bridge; 337-332-5273

6) **BAYOU DELIGHT RESTAURANT**
4038 Bayou Black Drive, Houma; 985-876-4879

7) **BADEAUX'S SEAFOOD RESTAURANT & BUFFET**
4429 U.S. Highway 90 East, Des Allemands; 985-758-9006.

8) **THE SHRIMP LOT**
100 West Bank Expressway, Westwego.

LOCAL KNOWLEDGE WHAT TO DO BETWEEN MEALS


• Laissez les bons temps rouler!

Warren Perrin, defender of the Cajuns

FIFTEEN YEARS AGO, Lafayette lawyer Warren Perrin sued the British government for expelling thousands of his Cajun ancestors—French Acadians—from Nova Scotia in 1755. All he wants is an apology from the Queen (she's looking into it) and for the rest of y'all to stop calling his people "coonass." ("It's not a nice word," he says, "any way you look at it.") When he's not needling the royal family, Perrin likes to drive out to Erath, his hometown, nine miles off Highway 90, where once a month there's a Cajun jam session at the **Museum Café** (337-937-0012). Sometimes country picker D. L. Menard (the "Cajun Hank Williams") shows up and sings his classic, "La Porte d'en Arrière," and there's usually a game of bourré (that's *boo-ray*), or Cajun poker, late into the night. As for the best place to watch a **cockfight**, since they're legal in Louisiana, well, that'd be Kaplan or Abbeville.

—BRYAN MEALER

The Skills of Summer (Part 2)

>HOW TO EAT FIFTY HOT DOGS IN TWELVE MINUTES

BY TAKERU KOBAYASHI HOT-DOG-EATING CHAMP

First and foremost stay in shape I know that sounds strange, but the fact is no one over 160 pounds has ever eaten more than thirty and a half hot dogs at the Fourth of July Nathan's Famous contest on Coney Island Fat prevents your stomach from expanding. You also have to be able to eat so fast that your brain doesn't have time to tell you to stop. A lot of people think they should start slow and sprint toward the finish, but if you do that, you'll be twenty hot dogs behind me at the six-minute mark. I always break the hot dogs in half, which saves me a lot of needless chewing And my trademark, the "Kobe Shake," is really just a little hop and a quick gyration to release any air pockets in my stomach I could force myself to burp, but I've come to see that you can't always rely on a burp in the middle of a hard-fought battle —AS TOLD (VIA TRANSLATOR) TO GERSH KUNTZMAN

>HOW TO CULTIVATE THE PERFECT LAWN

OUR EXPERT ROGER BAIRD HEAD GROUNDSKEEPER AT WRIGLEY FIELD

There are two categories for your grass better than your neighbor's, and not worth mentioning. So follow these tips and show that bastard who's the real backyard baron

1 Pony up the fifteen bucks for a new lawn-mower blade each spring. It's worth it Mowing with a dull blade will make your grass ragged and gray looking

2 Drastic trimming may have been the perfect solution for that hairy girl you met on the Haight, but an overgrown yard deserves more restraint Cutting more than a third of the blade will just open your lawn up to stress and disease

3 Instead of lightly watering your grass every couple days dump an inch on once a week, then leave it alone This saturates the soil to the roots and creates a reserve

4 Two and a half inches may be unacceptable in the bedroom, but it's a perfect height for your grass In hot months, too short means too dead So leave the putting greens for the folks at Augusta.

—PETER MARTIN

>HOW TO KICK SAND IN A NINETY-SEVEN-POUND WEAKLING'S FACE

OUR EXPERT STEPHEN LEATHERMAN DIRECTOR OF THE LABORATORY FOR COASTAL RESEARCH AT FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

It's a time-honored summertime image the bully kicking sand in the face of his pipe-squeak rival. But sand is an imperfect medium, so here's how to ensure that you get your message across.

High and dry Wait until the weakling is on dry sand because wet sand tends to clump. Dig about half your foot into the sand and kick straight up, creating a big, misty cloud Let the wind do the work

Pick your poison Only fine-grain sand—roughly 25 millimeters in diameter—creates the right mist Beaches in Florida and southern California are ideal but if the weakling is on Cape Cod or the Outer Banks, you might as well just punch him.

Add insult to injury Kicking sand into a rival's face is one thing but you have to get it in his eyes if you want to do some real damage Handing him a nice clean towel may appear to be a gesture of contrition but before he knows it, those jagged grains of silicon dioxide will be scratching his corneas. He'll get the message —G K

>HOW TO DRINK TEQUILA

Corazon de Agave añejo on the rocks, squeeze of lime There goes the afternoon.

>HOW TO PUT ON A BACKYARD FIREWORKS SHOW

OUR EXPERT JOHN CONKLING FORMER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE AMERICAN PYROTECHNICS ASSOCIATION

Fireworks display? Good Fireworks combined with unlimited Miller Genuine Draft and a strict legal code? Very, very bad The secrets to putting on a knockout show without setting your neighborhood ablaze:

Variety To get the most, er bang for your buck, mix up low-level fountains with mid-range Roman candles and high-firing "cakes"—tubes densely packed with pyrotechnics Same goes for colors and even noises, with a blend of whistles, crackles, and bangs.

Pacing Start big with a cake, then switch to low-level stuff and work your way back up. Crowds want nonstop action, so keep firing. (Tip A cigar makes the perfect lighter.) Play music, even if you're not choreographing like the pros, you'll get great effects by accident Keep it all to less than a half hour

Location You want an open area, with spectators fifty feet back No trees overhead no compost piles nearby If the grass is drier than Tara Reid's last bottle of gin, consider postponing But pull it off and bingo: shock and awe for the suburban set

—CHRIS TAYLOR

HOW TO READ

OR, MORE ACCURATELY, *WHAT* TO READ ON THE BEACH THIS SUMMER

>1. ***The Confessions of Max Tivoli*** (fiction/experimental, Farrar Straus & Giroux) by Andrew Sean Greer Child is 70 years old when born ages backward to tragicomic effect

2. ***Plain Heathen Mischief*** (legal thriller Knopf) by Martin Clark. Wicked humorous yarn around the downward spiral of a falsely accused Southern Baptist minister (Out in May)

3. ***Down and Dirty Pictures*** (nonfiction/inside poop Simon & Schuster) by Peter Biskind. The ugly entertaining story of Miramax.

4. ***Shadow Divers*** (nonfiction/nautical, Random House) by Robert Kurson Divers find sunken World War II U-boat author's attempt to retrace history goes swimmingly. (June)

5. ***The Continental Op*** (tough-guy fiction Vintage) by Dashiell Hammett. Masculine gritty noir. No one's done it better before or since

6. ***Skinny Dip*** (fiction/sleazy Florida Knopf) by Carl Hiaasen Guileless scheming biologist is haunted by his wife whom he thinks he's murdered (July)

7. ***I and Thou*** (religious philosophy Scribner) by Martin Buber Explains the meaning of existence and the relationship of man to God Breezy!

>HOW TO GRILL A FISH

BY MELISSA VAUGHAN

Any mook can cook red meat over an open fire. Grilling fish though takes finesse Here's how

Serves two

1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil (use the good stuff)
2 tbsp fresh lemon juice
2 garlic cloves, smashed
1 1/2 to 2 lbs striped bass or red snapper, gutted scaled, gills and fins removed (ask the fishmonger to do this)
coarse sea salt
3 thin lemon slices
1/2 cup coarsely chopped fennel fronds (the green leafy stuff that grows from the fennel bulb)

Whisk first three ingredients together in a small bowl, and season with salt and pepper Cut three half-inch deep diagonal slits across the skin on each side of the fish Rub the cavity, skin, and slits with the olive-oil mixture Season the fish inside and out with coarse sea salt. Stuff the cavity with the lemon slices and half of the fennel fronds Stuff the slits with the rest

If you're using charcoal—and we hope you are—let it burn for fifteen minutes, or until coals are glowing orange with a faint layer of ash forming If you're a gas-grill kind of guy preheat to medium-high

Liberally oil a grill-ready fish basket Put the fish in it. Place on the hot grate and cook for ten minutes About five minutes in, slip a spatula under the fish to keep the skin from sticking Flip and cook another ten minutes or until done To check for doneness insert the tip of a knife into the slits you cut. The flesh should be almost completely opaque and flaky Remove from the grill Fillet and drizzle with remaining olive oil mixture and sea salt to taste

>HOW TO SWIM FASTER

BY SUSAN CASEY

1 Get yourself a pair of fins with a medium blade and forgiving flex (TYR and Speedo are both good)

2 Don't separate your feet more than a few inches when you kick—and kick from your hips, not your knees Wide, scissoring kicks ruin stroke rhythm and throw your body off balance.

3 Don't plow Plowing is when your hips sink your head rides too high and too much energy goes into things that should be effortless, like breathing. You want to move forward like an arrow, with minimum drag and maximum streamlining To feel this body position, practice floating with your fins on and your arms by your sides. Keep your body straight but not rigid When you feel your legs sinking, press down with the top of your body, from your core right up to your forehead. You should be looking at the bottom with your head in a relaxed position. You may feel ridiculous Don't Olympic swimmers work on their body position daily

4 Rotate In freestyle, you don't want to move through the water on your stomach rather you want side-to-side rotation through a center axis (Think rotisserie chicken)

5 Remember Even if you forget tips 2 through 4, you'll still swim faster You're wearing fins

The Best of Summer **Best Gas Station/Sushi Bar:** Lee's Fresh Sushi and Deli located in the Poplar Avenue Citgo, Memphis, 901-681-0111 **Best Llama Festival Organized by Hare Krishnas:** Tenth Annual Llama Fest, July 17, at the Krishna Temple & Utah Valley Llama Farm in Spanish Fork, Utah. 801-798-3559 **Best Place to Sleep like a Sharecropper:** The Shack Up Inn in Clarksdale, Mississippi After getting stink-eyed at the local juke joint you'll sleep in a bona fide tin-roofed shack with walls made of Mississippi cypress. shackupinn.com **Best Pig Wrestling:** At the Teton County Fair in Jackson, Wyoming, July 28 tetoncountyfair.com **Best Bar that Straddles Two States:** The Flora-Bama, which is technically in Pensacola, Florida. **Bikini contests every Sunday all summer long** 850-492-0611 **Best Place to Leer at Breasts (sheathed):** The picnic area at Malibu Country Mart in Malibu, California. It's like a casting call for *Blue Crush*, but with sandwiches **Best Place to Leer at Breasts (unsheathed, unreal):** The European pool at Mandalay Bay Resort & Casino in Vegas mandalaybay.com/amenities/beach **Best Place to Leer at Breasts (unsheathed, all too real):** The Oregon Country Fair in Veneta, Oregon, July 9 to 11. Toe-ringed, glassy-eyed hippie chicks sporting fairy wings and little else oregoncountryfair.org **Best Summer:** This summer

PHOTOGRAPH BY SEAN MURPHY

PLANE JOE ZEFF

SUMMER ◆ DRIVIN' & EATIN'

The Low-Country Corridor

BY CAL FUSSMAN

NOW, THERE AIN'T no one backcountry road that goes direct from Charleston to Savannah so just follow me. ¶ No matter how stiff and straight your opinion is on the state of South Carolina it'll bend a little once you get out on the road. In the low country, there are no Cracker Barrels to try to tell you and sell you how the past was. Here, you pass the Spanish moss dangling from oak trees and a sign looking for good men that reads, AMERICANS WANTED. NO COWARDS ALLOWED. A few twists and turns later, you might be dipping a spoon into seafood chowder with roots back to West Africa. And while you can taste heaven in barbecue sauce all across this wide land of ours, where else in America can you find a shrimp burger?

Rule number one, then. Keep your mind as open as your eyes.

First place I'm gonna tell you about is an oyster shack so weather-beaten, downtrodden, and downright rickety that a good and decent man I know, an elderly man from up north who was in Charleston on vacation, could not believe his son would have the effrontery to ask him to go inside and eat. But you must **BOWENS ISLAND RESTAURANT** about fifteen minutes outside Charleston, is a holy place. Has been for more than fifty years. Even the booths inside remind you of church pews.

Order those oysters roasted. Sit back, close your eyes, and inhale the fragrance of the sea as they slide down. You are at one with the oystermen who've worked the Atlantic for centuries. On your way out, make sure you scribble your name on the wall like the thousands who've come before you.

About an hour inland, on a road called 17A, you'll find a little town called Cottageville. On the south side of the road is **BISCUIT'S MAIN STREET DINER** owned, quite naturally, by a man once described as being a biscuit shy of three hundred pounds. Need I describe the chicken-fried steak smothered in white gravy elbowing for room on the plate against a mountain of mashed potatoes topped with brown gravy? No, you get the idea.

Keep heading west on 17A as it loops south. It's a good thing your gas tank is running low because up ahead in Yemassee is the best filling station on earth. In fact, it's a shame even to refer to it as a gas station. The big sign out over the pumps says **HAROLD'S COUNTRY CLUB**. There's a horseshoe over the door inside, a bar with pigs' feet floating in a jar, some pool tables, movie posters, lumberjack saws, and a friendly deer head. If walls could talk, these would never shut up. The steaks served Friday night are so thick, it's hard to believe you can get 'em with all the fixin's for twelve dollars.

Rule number two. Fifteen dollars in these parts makes you a wealthy man at dinnertime.

Now take Highway 21 to Beaufort. (That's *Bew-fert*, unless you're French.) Just before 21 hits 170, you're going to smell the sweetest perfume known to man—which, I need not tell you, is barbecue smoke. It's floating from the chimney of a small brick building called **SGT. WHITE'S DINER**. Look for the saluting pig. It's indeed a blessing that Sarge survived the bombing in Beirut back in '83, because his sauce—a mixture of ketchup, mustard, vinegar, brown sugar, and a lot of other secrets, slathered over meat smoked so tender, it's just falling off the bone—has brought smiles to thousands. I personally have received nearly perfect scores at the Jack Daniel's World Championship Invitational Barbecue. I know 'cue. And I would drive a day out of my way for Sergeant White's ribs.

On to the legendary deep-fried shrimp burger at the **SHRIMP SHACK** on St. Helena Island. And if all this low-country cooking has you a tad worried about your cholesterol, stop in at **GULLAH GRUB RESTAURANT**, taste the seafood chowder, and find out why the descendants of West Africans often live to be a hundred.

Next morning, at exactly 10:40, I want you to be near the front of the line at 107 West Jones Street in Savannah. About twenty minutes later, the door to **MRS. WILKES' BOARDINGHOUSE** will open, and you'll enter a homey brick room and take a seat around a huge circular table along with eight other strangers who, an hour later, will be your friends. There'll be a moment to bow your head and say grace. And then out come collards, limas, sweet potatoes, beets as sweet as candy, and fried chicken about which the late Mrs. Wilkes once said, "If the colonel made chicken this good, he'd be a general." Leave room for banana pudding.

And leave yourself ample time for strolling the best strolling city in America. Which brings me to rule number three. It's gonna take a good while to walk this trip off.

1) BOWENS ISLAND RESTAURANT
1870 Bowens Island Road, James Island, 843-795-2757

2) BISCUIT'S MAIN STREET DINER
10714 Cottageville Highway, Cottageville, 843-835-8650

3) HAROLD'S COUNTRY CLUB
17 Highway 17A, Yemassee, 843-589-4360

4) SGT. WHITE'S DINER
1908 Boundary Street, Beaufort, 843-522-2029

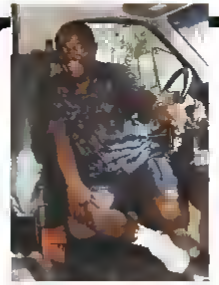
5) WE ISLAND GUMBO N' TINGS
Barefoot Farms, 863 Sea Island Parkway, St. Helena Island, 843-293-2083. Gumbo to go.

6) SHRIMP SHACK
1925 Sea Island Parkway, St. Helena Island, 843-838-2962

7) GULLAH GRUB RESTAURANT
877 Sea Island Parkway, St. Helena Island, 843-838-3041.

8) MRS. WILKES' BOARDINGHOUSE
107 West Jones Street, Savannah, 912-232-5997

LOCAL KNOWLEDGE ■ WHAT TO DO BETWEEN MEALS



■ Both Gullah and English are spoken on Brown's twenty-one-seat bus

Alphonso Brown, Gullah guide

"YOU WAN' ME FUH' SHO' YOU CHAAS'TN?" Brown asks in Gullah, the West African–English patois that's still spoken around here. In 1985, Brown started his business (gullahtours.com) in his old Honda, filling it with savvy tourists who were curious about the root doctors, sweet-grass basket weavers, and fishing-net makers who are the torch-bearers for Charleston's rich Gullah heritage. When Brown's not guiding, he enjoys a visit with his old friend, the ninety-two-year-old **blacksmith Philip Simmons** (philipsimmons.org), whose hand-forged, wrought-iron gates hang all over Charleston—and in the Smithsonian. (The NEA named him a national treasure in 1982.) On lazy Saturdays, Brown and the wife will drive down to **St. Helena Island**, hub of Gullah culture, to walk the grounds of the **Penn Center** (penncenter.com), one of the country's first schools for freed slaves. And come Sunday, he's leading the choir at Mount Zion A.M.E., where the Mount Zion Spiritual Singers belt out foot-stompin' spirituals as part of the **Piccolo Spoleto Festival** (piccolospoleto.com), which runs till June 13. —BRYAN MEALER

Maine's Route 1

BY CHARLES P. PIERCE

IN WORCESTER, Massachusetts I pretty much grew up amid diners or "lunch carts" as they were called by the folks old enough to remember the horse-pulled carts. Early in life my grandfather would take me to Ernest Ryan's place where I would hear discussions of political stratagems that likely never occurred to James Madison—nor Boss Tweed nor Caligula. Later as I matured, I would spend evenings at activities that very likely *did* occur to the authors of the Baltimore Catechism and I would wind up at the Parkway or the Miss Worcester—oh, blessed Miss Woo!—discussing my failure at one or all of the Seven Deadlies with a plate of spaghetti that I would come to regret the next morning. Diners have pretty much bounded my existence, truth be told.

To live the diner life these days, though, I have to go north to Maine, to Route 1 which winds through the small cities and smaller towns along the coast thickly bearded with inlets outcroppings, and tiny islands. Around certain bends you can catch a glimpse of the ocean, cold and gray beyond the pine trees. Now, it's not my place to argue that there's not fine dining to be found here—Fore Street in Portland is generally reckoned the finest restaurant in the state—but Route 1 in Maine is where the soul of the diner diner becomes immortal.

Two things figure prominently in the roadside fare hereabouts. One is shellfish, and the other is pie. Not surprisingly the menus depend heavily on whatever bewhiskered plug-ughes the locals can pull out of the rocky, jagged coastal waters. As to the pie, well if you walk away from the ocean into the forests there are an awful lot of berries growing there, and they can be whipped into an infinite variety of delicious combinations. Failing that, you can always throw the odd crustacean under the crust.

Let us move, then, you and I, from the north to the south. We'll begin in Waldoboro at **MOODY'S** which has been in business since 1927. When Route 1 was moved a few degrees southeast in the early 1930s, old Percy Moody up and moved his restaurant with it and it has stayed there ever since. Moody's is an all-purpose diner. In addition to the 104-seat restaurant, it features eighteen cabins, in case customers do not want to be stopped out on Route 1 for Driving Under the Influence of Pie—either walnut or Whoopie, both traditional favorites. Like so many attractions on Route 1, Moody's is a family business. Steve Moody now runs the place his grandfather started. "People began to stop here because we were one of the few places that served food on this stretch of road for so long," Steve explains. "Now people come for the atmosphere, too."

Down in Brunswick we find the **BRUNSWICK DINER** for which I have a soft spot because the Brunswick is a genuine Worcester diner, built there in the 1930s, when my hometown was the Detroit of diner manufacture. The Brunswick specializes in huge omelettes, as any good diner should. Have one. Have two. Take a nap for eight days.

Farther south in Portland, at the end of Hobson's Wharf, is **BECKY'S DINER** where Becky Rand has been serving up lobster rolls, substantial portions of meat loaf, and an assortment of pies since she was divorced and left with six children to raise thirteen years ago. "I worked as a waitress in three different places," she recalls. "I figured Portland needed a good diner because it didn't have one." She gave it one. It has a good, solid linoleum counter with good, solid red vinyl stools lined up along it. The clientele is an eclectic mix of Down East working stiffs and the tweedy art community. They all stay for dessert, especially the chocolate cream pie (with slivers of chocolate amid the whipped cream) and the Strawberry Superior, which is.

1) MOODY'S DINER
1885 U.S. Route 1, Waldoboro, 207-832-7755.

2) BRUNSWICK DINER
101 1/2 Pleasant Street, Brunswick, 207-721-1134.

3) FAT BOY DRIVE-IN
117 Bath Road, Brunswick, 207-729-9431. Give your headlights a flash and a waitress will appear from 1955.

4) BECKY'S DINER
390 Commercial Street, Portland, 207-773-7070.

5) MAINE DINER
2265 U.S. Route 1, Wells, 207-646-5561.

6) PIE IN THE SKY BAKERY
One River Road, Cape Neddick, 207-363-2056. For anyone who still believes fruit pies come shaped like a cube and wrapped in plastic.

7) BOB'S CLAM HUT
315 U.S. Route 1, Kittery, 207-439-4233.

There is an existential question about all famous diners: To wit: if you have a gift shop are you really still a diner? Moody's has one, and so does the **MAINE DINER** in Wells, where Route 1 starts to get busier and busier. Lobster here becomes diner food in that it becomes, well, pie. The Maine's lobster pie is justifiably famous, with big, juicy chunks of meat in a graham cracker crust, and it's been served to everyone from presidents (Bushes 41 and 43 both summer in nearby Kennebunkport) to hockey players and back again. Grab a fresh lobster roll for the road. You're going to need it.

Kittery, at the end of our stretch and the end of the state, used to be a sleepy little port town, the gateway to Maine. Then, alas, it was overrun by the attack of the outlet stores—dozens of them lined along both sides of Route 1. With them came the shoppers with the dull gleam in their eyes, their minds robbed from them, and with the shoppers came Starbucks and food courts and ... oh, good Lord, it's almost too awful to contemplate.

However, amid this desolate consumerist wasteland, hard by a little pond where loons swim, there is a low blue building that's been there since 1956, when the only other store was the Kittery Trading Post, where credulous tourists bought fringed jackets and spent good money on quasi-authentic American Indian beads and trinkets, giving the Euro-Americans some of their own back for that Manhattan-island business. **BOB'S CLAM HUT** is not specifically a diner, but it's clearly one in spirit. It has a long counter looking out on the road, winding past a huge mural of Gilligan and the Skipper and into a small dining room. You can sit there and eat the finest fried clams in all the clammy universe. The cornmeal and egg wash make them so close to delicate that you can overeat without knowing it. (A meal of *bad* fried clams, by contrast, can leave you feeling like you've eaten an Arco station, grease racks and all.) The counter here is a good place to sit and watch the outlet zombies move steadily north until Route 1 begins to rise and the old forest begins to close in on capitalism once again.

LOCAL KNOWLEDGE WHAT TO DO BETWEEN MEALS

Jim Barstow, salty dog

FOR THE PAST THIRTY YEARS, Captain Jim Barstow and his *Laura B* (an old World War II patrol boat) have been making the ten-mile haul from Port Clyde to Monhegan Island. He's responsible for delivering just about everything that makes the island run: mail, cargo, people. "We deliver everything but babies," he likes to say. (And cars—they're not allowed on the island.) In the predawn hours you might find him near the pier at **Port Clyde Fisherman's Co-op** (207-372-8922), where dozens of lobster boats load up on herring and redfish before heading out into the Atlantic. In the evening the captain might belly up to the **Harpoon bar** (207-372-6304), where the draggers and lobstermen bend elbows with local writers, artists, and even a Kennedy or two. ("There's also an astronaut," Barstow says. "But we don't name names at the Harpoon.") And around midday—the best time to be on the water this far north—he'll shuttle you out past **Eastern Egg Rock,** where a colony of pint-sized puffins enjoys the short, much anticipated celebration of summer.

—BRYAN MEALER

•Ride with the captain—and the mail—to Monhegan Island, where the seals, eagles, and ospreys tag along de

Summer Time

Photographs by GREG DELY

Bikinis, m[illegible] the joy of rubbi[illegible] lotion all over [illegible] With summer ple[illegible] this... it's easy to [illegible] of time. To keep [illegible] missing your ne[illegible] appointment, Esquire pi[illegible] **10** of summer's coolest watches [illegible] and one sun-tanned [illegible] to show th[illegible]

Poolside Rule No. 13 (exiting the pool): As she climbs up the ladder, offer a fresh towel (100 percent cotton only) quickly [illegible] ing at her glistening wet [illegible]

CLOCKWI[illegible] Stainless-steel Formula 1 [illegible] by **TAG Heu[illegible]** steel Luminor Marina automatic watch ($4,[illegible]00) by **Panerai**; [illegible] chronograph ($9,200) by **Cartier**; steel Cupper diver's watch ($2[illegible]) by **Hermès**. Bikini by **J Erwin**; white-gold ring by **Bulgari**; silver necklace by [illegible] **Hyman**. Sunglasses by **Michael Kors**. Cotton beach towel by **Hermès**

Poolside Rule No 27 (refreshment):

FROM LEFT:

Poolside Rule No. 41 (the cooldown): When she asks you to gently cool her down, make sure to remove all ice cubes from your glass of water before splashing.

FROM TOP: Stainless-steel TT1 diver's watch ($975) by **Oris**; titanium Seamaster chronometer chronograph ($4,295) by **Omega**; stainless-steel Submariner Date chronometer ($6,675) by **Rolex**. Bikini by **Norma Kamali**; yellow-gold-and-semiprecious-stone pendant and yellow-gold chain by **Bulgari**. For store information, see page 159. Hair by Rodney Groves for Vartali Salon. Makeup by Amy Komorowski for artheusemanagement.com. Manicure by Roseann Singleton for Art Dept.

Brutally Honest Personals

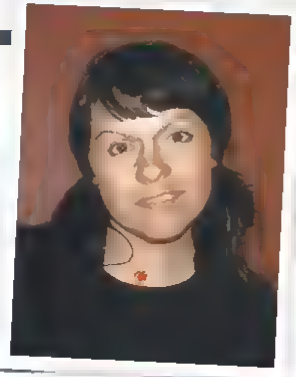
The singles below are real people with real issues. Some are overweight. Others are crippled by debt. Quite a few live with their parents. But they all have one thing in common: They are available. And they've put themselves out there with the hope of finding someone willing to accept them at face value. So, please, scan their profiles. You may not get exactly what you want, but at least you know exactly what you're getting.

To contact any of our brutally honest singles, log on to esquire.com/brutal

SNAPSHOT

Dana Robinson

Age: 28
Height: I almost always have to stand on some object to reach some other object.
Weight: Depends on the week, but I'd put my money on 150
Occupation: Online-community manager
Location: Los Angeles
What you should know up front. My boyfriend of three years broke up with me the day before Valentine's Day.



My newly lowered self-esteem coupled with my anger, depression, and an overwillingness to drink one too many vodka and sodas is just what the doctor ordered to get me into the sack on the first date. It's true, I've eaten one too many bonbons in recent days, and my pants are feeling a little snugger. Yet despite my spare tire, ghetto booty, and the mountain of laundry taking over my room, I'm cute.
A word on strategy: Dating me is like long-distance running. Once you get past the first couple of miles, the rest is cake, baby.

Philip Kaplan

Age: 56
Height: 5'8"
Weight: 190—could lose 30
Occupation: Chauffeur
Last time had sex: January 2000
Last vacation: 1983
Location: Chicago

» I may shoot blanks, but I have a mouthful of beautiful custom-made teeth. The only problem is that I can't eat any hard foods, which might be the reason that I have an abundance of gas. Fortunately, my farts don't smell (too much). They're just loud. My sense of humor is dry and sarcastic, leading me to pick out other people's faults and poke fun at them. I barely make enough money to get by and don't like to go on airplanes, boats, or fast, scary rides at amusement parks.
Sense of style. I'm proud of the fact that the majority of my clothes come from Kmart.

Stefan Johnson

Age: 27
Height: 6'3"
Weight: 195
Occupation: Temp
Last time had sex. A few nights ago
Location: Parents' couch in San Francisco

» I'm lanky, ridiculously in debt, and almost always stoned. I don't have much ambition and live at home. Nonetheless, I'm optimistic and have a vexing confidence. You can usually find me on my couch or in bed or, if I'm feeling active, eating cookies in front of the TV. When I do drag myself out of bed, I actually enjoy limited exercise, frivolous indulgences, and frequent masturbation.
Seeking. Gorgeous model blinded by my brilliance and ready to run away with me to Jamaica. (You'll probably have to pay.)

SNAPSHOT

Adena Joy DeMonte

Age: 21
Height: 5'4"
Weight: 151
Occupation. Theater student
Location. Chicago
Seeking: A guy who understands that I am the biggest hypocrite on earth

My friend says I have an amazing heart, although I tend to disagree. I'm as narcissistic and verbose as I am obsessive and introspective. I fear intimacy and often create drama. I've made annoying others into an art. Because I avoid things that don't interest me, my living spaces tend to resemble colorful garbage dumps without the horrid smell. And despite having a large stomach and excess facial and body hair from polycystic-ovary syndrome, I am extremely picky.
Why you should date me: I sing show tunes all night.

Rebecca K.

Age: 31
Height: 5'2"
Weight: 110
Location: Southern California
Prescription-drug addiction. Prozac

» When I feel bad, it helps me to call you at work. Frequently. Rushing me off the phone will just make me cry and pester you with e-mails. I have a little dog that I tend to bring everywhere, because if I leave him at home, he yips. If you plan on sleeping with me, you will not complain when I bring him on dates in a little black bag. I'm a little curious about spanking, but we can never try it at my house, because my ex-boyfriend lives on the other side of the wall and will hear us.
Sexual quirk. I will blow you, but not consistently.

Dave Scheffler

Age: 57
Height: 6'2"
Weight: 255
Occupation: Graphic artist
Location: New Jersey
Number of sexual partners: 15 to 20 (not at once, however)
Last time had sex: June 2003

» I'm an overweight, middle-aged underachiever. The skull tattoos on my arms complement my wardrobe, which I call rural proletarian. I sleep on the floor in a sparsely furnished apartment. I urinate frequently and pick my nose. I'm embarrassed that I own a Bible. After a tragic foray into Santeria, I've incurred crushing debt.
Sexual habits: Can be summed up simply: brief digital, extended oral, premature genital. I have herpes.

Michelle Hardenbrook

Age: 52
Height and weight: 6 inches too short or 40 pounds too heavy
Occupation. Real estate consultant
Location. Renton, Washington
Last time had sex. Clinton's first term

» My breasts sag enough that I could throw them over my shoulders to fend off cold, and my stomach seems to be following them south. If you get to see me naked, you'll notice that my skin is pale enough to light a room. I have been divorced for years and haven't had sex (except with myself) since. I rarely date, and I assume this is because the good men are either dead, married, or still in puberty.
A note on getting me into the sack. Men seem to think that because I am not pretty or slim, I am an easy lay, one who won't expect much in return. Well, not true. I am a tough old broad who doesn't take any crap but does like a little BDSM (bondage/sadomasochism).

Brutally Honest Personals

Bob Kyrlach

Age: 82
Height: Currently 5'8" (I've shrunk two inches in old age)
Weight: 160
Location: Trailer east of Albuquerque

>> I'm a single, retired eighty-two-year-old high school teacher living in a twelve-by-sixty-foot trailer in the country with only my dog. My income is principally from my teacher's pension, and my net worth is barely six figures. Because I try to bike every day, I look pretty good in anything from my birthday suit to a tux. When I eat out, I usually opt for the "senior's plate" at a Mexican restaurant.
Redeeming quality: Because of my age, I downhill ski for free.

Kirk White

Age: 30
Height: 5'11"
Weight: 185
Occupation: Unemployed
Number of sexual partners: 0
Last date: Never
Location: San Francisco

>> I am a thirty-year-old virgin on the verge of giving up on love. When I do have a job, it's low paying, and credit consolidators take half of what I earn. I'm behind on my rent, emotionally closed, and take medication to treat my depression. I'm short, not that attractive, a little fat, and have a very small penis. I also have a problem with excessive farting. I studied mathematics in college but still live under the delusional hope of becoming an actor.
Seeking: A good-looking, intelligent woman who can overlook my physical shortcomings and teach me about love. Please hurry.

Laine Doss

Age: 37
Height: 5'5"
Weight: 135
Occupation: Actress
Embarrassing fact: Went on a blind date with a blind man.
Location: Jersey City, New Jersey

>> Buried under a mountain of credit-card bills and debt from spending like Paris Hilton on a bender. I live in the lousy part of Jersey City with three dogs and two rats, named Ratso, Rizzo and Albino Andy. My dogs misbehave and are small toy poodles—the kiss of death for any man. I am a runner and an actress, but I am forced to do bad interactive murder mysteries that I refer to as "leading parts in off-Broadway plays." Even though I run marathons, I still can't lose those few pounds. But I can probably kick someone to death with my legs of steel.
Marriage philosophy: I hated it. I would marry again only for money.

Matthew Steckler

Age: 28
Height: 5'8"
Weight: 165
Occupation: Technical-support manager
Location: Seattle
Education: Master of Brewing Sciences
Number of sexual partners: 15

>> Some say I look like Robin Williams. I'm somewhat athletic, or at least was. Now I smoke. I own the *Transformers* box set on DVD. I'm lost between the Gap and Banana Republic and am in dire need of a *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* makeover. I use Dial and Irish Spring soap and sleep with my feet outside of the covers. I'm at the age when commitment sounds great, but the thought of breaking away from the beer-and-poker nights scares the crap out of me.
Redeeming qualities: Besides being an international man of mystery, I like foreplay, redheads, and Thai food (but not necessarily in that order).

SNAPSHOT

Rachel Tropp

Age: 23
Height: 5'8"
Weight: 125
Occupation: Receptionist
Location: Old room in my parents' house, complete with dippy anime posters, in Newton, Massachusetts

I work a lousy, low-paying job and live with my parents while waiting to get into the police academy. I don't spend much time on my appearance; when you say mousse, I think the chocolate kind. I'm skinny and small-breasted. I have moles in odd places and should probably clip my toenails more often. I prefer sitting around playing video games to doing things. I drink a good deal and make fun of people I don't even know.
Redeeming qualities: I can probably beat you at Scrabble and pool.

SNAPSHOT

Elliott Brown

Age: 28
Height: 5'7"
Weight: "Plus 10"
Occupation: Underemployed
Location: San Francisco
Number of sexual partners: Less than 10
In a nutshell: Your little brother will think I'm cool, but your big brother will think I'm a tool.

I am prone to exaggeration, which is both good and bad. For example, I will always tell you that you are prettier than I actually think you are, but I also tend to use words (like *underemployed*) that make me look prettier than I really am. My interests include coffee, wine, procrastination, reading, and battling a mild case of psoriasis. I have little game, but I'm good at Trivial Pursuit. (In fact, "trivial pursuit" would be a good way to classify my life to this point.)

Robby Merkin

Age: 52
Height: 5'4"
Weight: 147
Occupation: Music producer
Location: New York City

>> Though I committed through twenty years of a failed marriage, I have a lousy track record when it comes to monogamy. As soon as want and desire become need, I get squeamish and start roaming for the next conquest. I'm opinionated and annoyingly logical. I'm short and color-blind. I'm reasonably trim for my age, which means I'm getting a bit thick in the middle. I hate shopping and wear mostly jeans and T-shirts. If you're looking for a guy with no mother issues, I'm not for you. If you want kids, I'm not for you. But if you want someone whose temper can be easily provoked, I'm your guy.
Seeking: Big-titted, sex-hungry chick of eighteen. (I can be pretty aggressive in bed and would like to be a lot more.)

Leah J.

Age: 26
Height: 5'11"
Weight: Melting away
Occupation: Ice-cream-store manager
Location: Chicago
Last time had a boyfriend: Sophomore year of high school

>> I'm wasting my chemistry degree at an ice-cream parlor in Chicago. For the last three or four years, I've been huffing and puffing up the stairs in an out-of-shape overweight size-22 body, though I recently lost more than fifty pounds. Dating me will be a gamble in the physical department: Will she gain? Won't she gain? It will also be a gamble in the bedroom: Will she go down? Won't she go down? I do a bit of stand-up comedy, so most of our relationship will end up in a joke—quite literally—onstage. I have a cat that sheds on everything and hates most men.
Sexual habits: I will gladly accept oral, but chances are high that I'll get bored and roll over and try to fall asleep.

Elise Levy

Age: 22
Height: 5'1"
Weight: 105
Occupation: Student
Location: Berkeley, California
Beware: If you have a small penis, I'll likely gossip about it with my friends.

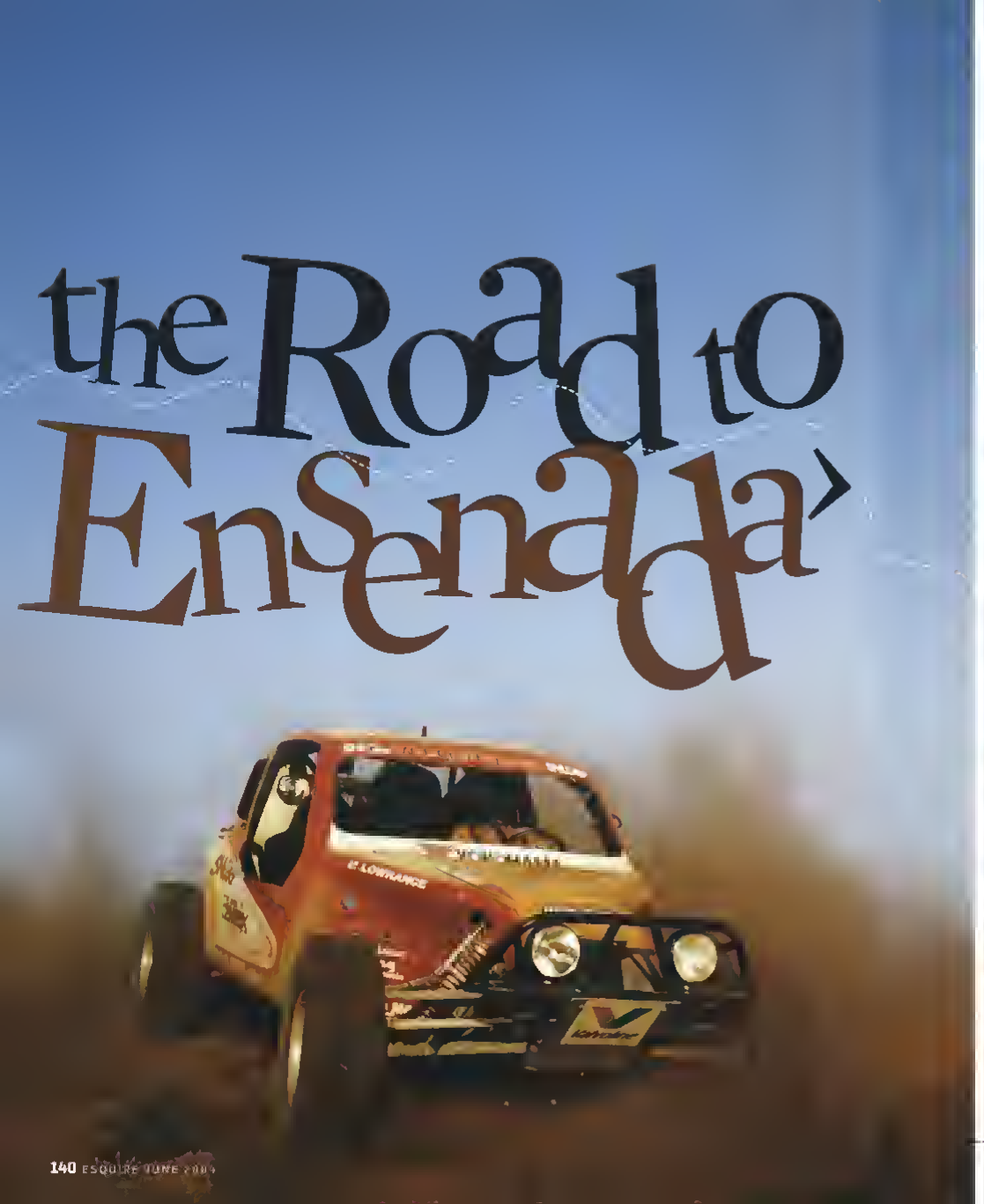
>> I'm beautiful, lithe, and charming. I dance twelve hours of ballet a week, like to wear corsets during sex, and sleep in ducky pajamas. So why do I need to place an ad? I'm greedy. The only thing that makes me happy is cash in my account. The larger the diamonds, the wider my smile. I know there are men out there who want a pretty young thing on their arm and who are willing to spoil them to keep them there. I want to meet those men. I can be your devoted girl. I can make your coworkers green with envy. I can charm my way into your boss's inner circle. I can be as good for you as you are for me. So let's make a deal.

Beth F.

Age: 45
Height: 5'7"
Weight: 127
Occupation: Writer/editor
Location: Chicago
Sense of style: English professor who's not dead from the neck down

>> Well, I don't have syphilis. But my roots are gray, my breasts are shot, and my mother lives with me (late-stage Alzheimer's). I have two ex-husbands and a cat with three legs, and I've never in my life gotten to a single appointment on time. On the other hand, I'm tall and thin, saucy and smart. I may pad around the house in big fuzzy leopard slippers with bleach cream on my upper lip, but I have property, perfect pitch, culture, and credentials. I can bring down the house at the company Christmas party. I'm a genius in the kitchen. And when I whip your ass at Scrabble, you'll still feel like you won. ■

the Road to Ensenada



With many hundreds of miles to go, Esquire heads off road at the Baja 1000 to show that summer's hottest clothes work perfectly when the dirt's about to fly PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHRIS McPHERSON

Dude, where's my road? When the pavement disappears, a dune buggy provides the perfect perch. Her jacket by A/X Armani Exchange.

OPPOSITE One of our intrepid road warriors goes in search of Baja's sandy beaches. Bikini by Alberta Ferretti, boots by Emu

ABOVE The best thing to do when your buggy breaks down in the desert? Make her laugh. Then pray for a kind soul to stop and help. Leather jacket ($495), cotton henley ($85), and cotton trousers ($165), Boss by Hugo Boss. Her bikini by Alberta Ferretti

ABOVE. Rule No. 37 in Baja: Dressing better than the competition is the quickest way for you and your buggy to end up in a ditch. Nylon jacket ($188) and nylon trousers ($158) by Armani Jeans.

OPPOSITE. When the sun goes down, a makeshift campsite goes up. From left: Cotton henley ($125) and cotton trousers ($145) by DKNY. Nylon jacket ($275), cotton sweatshirt ($135), and linen trousers ($145) by DKNY; boots ($105) by Columbia. On women, from left: Bikini by Dolce & Gabbana; pants by Abercrombie & Fitch. Top and pants by Abercrombie & Fitch. For store information see page 159. Produced by Emily Roth. Grooming by Kiki Benet at therexagency.com

What I've Learned

Emmylou Harris

As soon as you start worrying about whether you're gonna come up with the goods or not, you might as well leave

God is the big question mark. Heaven is the even bigger question mark. Death is just another question mark

Patriotism can be good or bad. Knee-jerk patriotism can be very bad. I'm patriotic almost to the point of self-consciousness, but I love my country the way I love a friend or a child who I would correct if she was going the wrong way. Who I expect the very best from.

The thing about working with your heroes is that when you're working, you're only thinking about the work. It was only after the fact that I could sit back and say to myself, *I just recorded with Bob Dylan*

The South is transparent.

You have to learn compassion and forgiveness. But you still have to hold people to a certain standard—and hold yourself to that same standard.

Normal is a cycle on a washing machine

When I was sixteen, I wrote Pete Seeger a letter, and I poured my heart out. I said, "What do I do to have the credibility to be a folk singer?" He wrote me back and said, "Don't worry about not suffering. It will happen. Just stand on the tracks long enough and the train will run you right down."

You have to lay yourself on the altar to the muse. Because once she stops coming around, you're really up the creek without a paddle.

We have a saying down South that someone is as real as dirt. That was Johnny Cash. This man was so larger-than-life, he had a presence that was not like anyone I'll ever meet. He was so incredibly human, and yet cut from another cloth. He was the uncommon common man. It's just being in a rarefied air, but you didn't have any trouble breathing it.

Any time you hire a lawyer for something, you're gonna pay for it, and more than lawyer fees. I mean, I guess downloading is a problem, but I don't feel it impacts me. The record companies are overreacting. You're not gonna change people. People don't mind paying ninety-nine cents for something. What people do mind is paying twenty bucks for music that's not very good.

I'm the poster child for life after radio.

It's pretty dangerous right now to speak about your political views. But there is a better way to speak out than the way Natalie [Maines, of the Dixie Chicks] did. The example is Bono. He's talking to the people who might listen. He's not being overtly critical. He's not saying, You're wrong and I'm right. He is taking an impassioned stance, putting his money where his mouth is. He's trying to engage, not make enemies.

During those long summer tours, there's nothing on television that doesn't rot your brain except for baseball. And I love the game. I love the history of the game. I love the fact that anything can happen but probably won't. But sometimes does. I love that you don't have to be a perfect human specimen to be a good player; you can be overweight, you can be too short, too skinny.

Let's just say I'm a National League girl, because I don't believe in the designated hitter. And you can quote me on that.

I like the fact that Beck's version of "Sin City" was more country than either Gram Parsons's or mine. He's amazing. He's a chameleon.

Everybody walking around on this planet has had their heart broken. And if they haven't experienced tragedy, they're headed for it.

I didn't start smoking till I was in my early forties, so I think I can smoke for twenty years moderately and deal with it later.

I was six the day my father came home—the best day of my life. He was a POW in Korea, and we didn't know whether he was dead or alive. He was missing for about three months before we found out. He was shot down and tortured, but he came back whole—spiritually and emotionally—with the attitude "There but for the grace of God go I." They just didn't find his breaking point. And he never even talked about his experiences. I found out after his death that he was the senior officer in the camp. He became the leader of the men, keeping their morale up, trying to organize how to conduct oneself in the camp, maintain. That's the time you need to hold on to your principles. He rose to the occasion. You don't lose certain principles just because you're in extreme circumstances.

The only thing I know how to do is make music.

There I was. Here I am.

Mr. President, Here's How to Make Sense of Our Iraq Strategy >

One of the architects of the Pentagon's New Map of the world offers a most important guide to **a**) why the boys will never be coming home and **b**) why this is the first step toward a world without war

By THOMAS P M BARNETT

Is this any way to run a global war on terrorism? The new conventional wisdom is that the warmongering neocons of the Bush administration have hijacked U S foreign policy and sent the world down the pathway of perpetual war Instead of dissecting the rather hysterical strain of most of that analysis let me tell you what this feedback should really tell us about the world we now live in And as opaque as the administration has been in signaling its values and true motivations I will try in this piece to explain what Iraq should mean to us why all the pain we have encountered there is the price we must pay to ensure a peaceful century and why this is the birthing process of a future worth creating. ¶ There is no doubt that when the Bush administration decided to lay a "big bang" upon the Middle East by toppling Saddam Hussein and committing our nation to reconnecting a brutalized isolated Iraqi society to the world outside it proceeded with virtually no public or international debate about the scope of this grand historical task I, however, see a clear link between 9/11 and President Bush's declared intention of "transforming" the Middle East ¶ In the March 2003 issue of this magazine I published an article called "The Pentagon's New Map" [available

ILLUSTRATION BY DANIEL BEJAR

at Esquire com/barnett] which was about work I had spent years doing at the Naval War College and the Pentagon to figure out the true threat environment for the United States in a post-cold-war world. The answer? Most of the world is peaceable and functioning. I call that the Core, and it is basically the parts of the world including China, where globalization has taken root to some degree. The rest of the world, which had never been considered by the Pentagon to be a direct threat much less the gravest threat we face is made up of the countries that remain disconnected either because of abject poverty or political or cultural repression the Caribbean Rim virtually all of Africa the Balkans, the Caucasus, Central Asia the Middle East Southwest Asia and much of Southeast Asia This I call the Gap The primary goal of the foreign policy of the United States should be in my view, to shrink the Gap. Nothing about our Iraq experience has changed this view

The only way America can truly achieve strategic security in the age of globalization is by destroying disconnectedness We fight here with fire Al Qaeda whose true grievance lie wholly within the Persian Gulf sought to destroy the Core's connectedness on 9/11 by triggering what I call a system perturbation that would throw our rules into flux Its hope was to shock America and the West into abandoning the Gulf region first militarily then politically and finally economically Al Qaeda hoped to deroxify the region s societies through disconnectedness

But the president decided correctly to fight back by trying to destroy disconnectedness in the Gulf region We seek to do unto al Qaeda as it did unto us trigger a system perturbation that will send all the region s rule sets into flux Saddam Hussein s outlaw regime was dangerously disconnected from the globalizing world—from our rule sets our norms and all the ties that bind the Core together in mutually assured dependence

Disconnecting the great disconnector from the Gulf s security scene is only the beginning of our effort because now Iraq becomes the great battlefield for the soul of the whole region That second victory will be far more difficult to achieve Our efforts to integrate Iraq into a wider world will pit all the forces of disconnectedness in the region against us Therefore we must enlist the aid of all the forces of connectedness across the Core—not just their troops but their investment flows and their commercial networks

America needs to demonstrate to the Middle East that there is such a thing as a future worth creating there not just a past worth re creating which is all the bin Ladens will ever offer Muslim populations—a retreat from today's diminished expectations If America cannot muster the will—not to mention the Core s aid—to win this struggle in Iraq we will send a clear signal to the region that there is no future in the Core for any of these states save Israel

History's clock is already ticking on that great task. As the world progressively decarbonizes its energy profile, moving away from oil and toward hydrogen obtained from natural gas the Middle East s security deficit will become a cross that not even the United States will long be willing to bear The bin Ladens of that region know this and thus will act with increasing desperation to engineer our abandonment of the region. Like Vladimir Lenin a century earlier, bin Laden dreams of breaking off a large chunk of humanity into a separate rule set sphere, where our rules hold no sway, where our money finds no purchase, and where our polluting cultural exports can be effectively repelled. Bin Laden s offer is the offer of all would-be dictators *Just leave these people to me and I will trouble you no further*

By taking down Saddam Hussein and turning Iraq into a magnet for every jihadist with a one way ticket to paradise, America has really thrown down the gauntlet in the Middle East. It has finally begun exporting security to that part of the world for real In the past we always had ulterior motives to keep the Soviets out, to keep the oil flowing, to keep Israel safe But reconnecting Iraq to the world is so much bigger than any of those goals It is about creating a future worth living for a billion Muslims we could just as easily consign to the past

Powell Doctrine, R.I.P.

WHAT DOES THIS NEW APPROACH MEAN FOR THIS NATION and the world over the long run? Let me be very clear about this The boys are never coming home America is not leaving the Middle East until the Middle East joins the world It s that simple *No exit means no exit strategy*

One of the worst strategic concepts the Pentagon ever came up with was General Colin Powell s notion that America should never intervene militarily overseas unless and until an exit strategy is clearly defined. The legacy of that dictum has poisoned the U S military s strategic planning ever since, generating the force we have today—perfect for drive-by regime changes and understaffed for everything else

Fortunately, the Powell doctrine has died with Operation Iraqi Freedom, and with it dies America s decades-long tendency to blow off all the suffering and instability that plagues the Gap or what we used to call the Third World What is so amazingly courageous about what the Bush administration has done in trying to generate a "big bang" throughout the Middle East is that it has committed our nation to shrinking a major portion of the Gap in one fell swoop By doing so, I believe this administration has forced America to finally come through on promises repeatedly offered during the cold war but never delivered upon. The irony of course, is that the administration is guilty of such grotesque dissembling over its rationale for the war that it is unable to fully take credit for this historic achievement And its dissembling has also aroused the passions of the empire crowd

The concept of an "American empire" is very chic right now in literary and academic circles, and since the Bush administration never seems to offer a sufficiently comprehensive answer to the question weighing on most Americans' minds ("Where is this all leading?"), many of our best and brightest have connected the relevant dots and declared Washington the de facto Rome of a new imperial age

This is all nonsense and bad history to boot Empires involve enforcing maximal rule sets, in which the leader tells the led not just what they cannot do but what they must do. This has never been the American way of war or peace and does not reflect our system of governance We enforce minimum rule sets carefully ruling out only the most obviously destructive behavior Our goal must be to extend the Core s security rule set into the Gap and by doing so shrink the Gap progressively over time This is not about extending America s rule but about extending the genuine freedom that collective security provides. All this talk about empire mistakenly seeks to impose a nineteenth century simplicity upon a twenty-first-century complexity In short this era's version of globalization comes with rules not a ruler

What is so courageous about what the Bush administration has done in trying to generate a "big bang" throughout the Middle East is that it has committed to shrinking a major part of the Gap in one fell swoop.

To deny that achievement is to discount the vast improvement America brought to the system administration of globalization following World War II compared with earlier, deeply flawed efforts by Europe s monarchies—Britain included

There is no doubt that many governments in the Core still view the world system as a balance of powers, and so any rise in U S influence or presence in the Middle East is seen as a loss of their influence or presence there Too many of these "great powers" are led by small minds who prefer America s failures to the Core s expansion, because they perceive their national interests to be enhanced by the former and diminished by the latter They prefer the Gap s continued suffering to their own loss of prestige and they should be ashamed of their selfishness

But America is far from alone in this great historical quest As we realign our global military basing structure to better reflect our continuing role as military Leviathan throughout the Gap, we leave behind old friends in Western Europe and embrace new ones in Eastern Europe We increasingly trust East Asia to police itself while we export security to West Asia We even go so far as to lease one and work toward future bases sprinkled throughout the African continent a region long abandoned by the West to sniff decades of endemic conflict and disease

The New Strategic Paradigm: Disconnectedness Defines Danger, or, Kiss Those Dictators Goodbye

SO WHY ALL THE DISSEMBLING ON THE PART OF OUR political leadership? Well, the truth is, we are just coming to terms with a new grand strategy for the United States, the historical successor to containment and our government doesn t yet have the words to explain this vision to the world So we come off as dishonest which is a terrible mistake because this vision describes a future worth creating making globalization truly global This is something to be proud of not something to run from

The defense community spent the entire post cold-war period scanning the strategic horizon desperately searching for the fabled near peer competitor that would someday replace our late beloved foe the Soviet Union About eight years ago most defense strategists fell in love with China convincing themselves that here was an enemy worth plotting against. Since then the great bureaucratic push to "transform" the U S military into the high-tech warrior force of tomorrow has focused almost exclusively on that conflict model—basically China s invasion of Taiwan in 2020

It was a beautiful dream, one easily sold to a Congress whose only interest in national-security planning is "Will you build it in my district?" It also corresponded to the Bush administration's view of the world prior to 9/11, which focused exclusively on great powers while expressing disdain for the Clinton administration's feeble attempts at nation-building in Third World wastelands Frankly, it made everyone in Washington happy, because casting China as the future enemy provided the national-security establishment with a familiar villain big bad, and communist

Naturally, the defense and intelligence communities reshaped themselves for this "new" challenge. We hired China experts by the barrelful and scripted all our war games to feature a large, unnamed Asian land power with an unhealthy interest in a small island nation off its coast You want to know why we don't have a clue about what goes on inside the Gap? Because our military strategists spent a decade dreaming of an opponent that would not arise, for a war that no longer existed We're the drunk looking for his lost car keys under the streetlamp instead of near his car a block away, because "the light's better over here"

The new rule set here is a simple one We need to refocus all of our war-planning and intelligence systems from the Core to the Gap This doesn't mean we still don't maintain a hedge against possible Chinese mischief It just means a new strategic paradigm rules the roost Disconnectedness defines danger You want to locate the real danger in the system? Focus on those countries or regions most disconnected from the global economy, not those desperately working to integrate themselves with the outside world—like China

What the intelligence failures on Iraq and al Qaeda should tell the Bush administration (and any that follow) is that it s time to get explicit with the American people and the world about how there are simply two very different security rule sets in the world today one that corresponds to the stable and overwhelmingly peaceful Core and another that corresponds to the violence-ridden and increasingly unstable Gap. What scares most people about the Iraq war is the sense that the Bush administration lied to them in order to whip up sufficient popular support for taking down Saddam Hussein The White House comes off like the cop who yells out "He's got a gun" and then airs out the "suspect" with a barrage of shots only to discover later that he was just pulling out his wallet

Without reopening the entire debate on Saddam, who I think we'll all admit had multiple priors and a number of outstanding warrants for his arrest, just take a minute and ask yourself why this administration felt it needed to hype its case for "present danger" to such an unseemly degree. The majority of Americans had already expressed support in polls for removing

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Our Iraq Strategy

Saddam simply because of all the bad things he had done and continued to do to his people. So why all the unnecessary drama?

I'll tell you why. The international system today lacks any sort of recognized institutional rule set for processing a politically bankrupt state. We have one for economically bankrupt states, and it's called the IMF bailout and rehab process. We may argue incessantly about that rule set but at least we've got one. So when an Asian financial "flu" disabled a number of states in 1997 the system processed that entire crowd within a couple of years.

What do we have for the Saddams and Mugabes and Kim Jong Ils of the world? Just a toothless UN Security Council whose only "weapon" is sanctions that inevitably kill innocent civilians while doing nothing to change the behavior of the regime. The UN is at best a legislative branch for the global community, whereas the U.S. is clearly the closest thing we have to an executive Leviathan able to prosecute criminal actors across the system.

The new rule set on this one is relatively straightforward but difficult to achieve: we need an IMF-like international organization that is set up to process dangerous Gap leaders who have ruled beyond their expiration date. It's not a long list, but imagine how much better a world we'd have if we could somehow manage to ditch all these dictators in a manner the entire Core could buy into—even the French.

As for the American public, what the intelligence failure on Iraq should translate into is a new and frank understanding of the limits of arms control. Again, different worlds (Core, Gap) require different rule sets on security. Getting any state from the Gap into the Core means, first and foremost, getting that state to accept the Core's fairly clear rule on security with regard to WMD—basically "just say no." I know it's hypocritical for nuclear powers to tell smaller states to "Do as I say, not as I do," but on WMD I think that it's better to err on the side of order over justice.

What Americans need to understand about the potential (and real) proliferation of WMD inside the Gap is that all the arms-control treaties in the world won't do a damn thing to stop it. All such treaties reflect the conventional wisdom of life inside the Core, where mutually assured destruction has basically ended great power war. That logic or that security rule set simply does not penetrate the Gap. So when states or transnational actors inside the Gap make moves in the direction of acquiring WMD, the new security rule set called preemptive war not only makes sense, it is imperative. If the Core lets the Gap's lawlessness on WMD infect our long-standing stability on nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, then we will be doing nothing less than throwing away the cold war's most important peace dividend.

Pentagon vs. Pentagon: Why We Will Soon Have Two Militaries, Not One

The second reason why so much of the world is unhappy with the current state of affairs in Iraq is that it's now clear that the Bush administration did a terrible job of thinking beyond Saddam's takedown. In effect, it is guilty of planning for war within the context of war when it should have been planning for war within the context of everything else. This is an acute and continuing problem for President Bush himself, who has gone so far as to color his reelection campaign with the imagery of his being a "war president," when both the public and the world at large clearly want evidence that his administration isn't myopically focused on this global war on terrorism but instead has learned to locate that much-needed security effort within the larger political, social, and economic context of globalization's advance—or everything else.

Don't get me wrong. I don't lay all the blame for this sad state of affairs on the Bush administration alone. The Pentagon has spent the last decade and a half willfully ignoring its growing workload throughout the Gap. We've spent the entire post-cold-war period engaging in what are derisively known throughout the defense community as "military operations other than war" (MOOTW, or *Moo-twah* to insiders) and yet we have adamantly refused to rebalance our forces—especially our National Guard and Reserves—to account for this dramatic uptick in the Gap's demand for our services. Simply put, we currently have a military that can do two or three Saddam-style takedowns every year but cannot pull off even one Iraq-style occupation.

But that is changing rapidly, and for the better. Already, senior Defense Department leaders are pushing for the creation of a "stabilization force" component within the U.S. military. A year ago, such a proposal would have been summarily rejected, but today it strikes most serious defense analysts as a crucial task of defense transformation. In this new era, our military interventions will be judged primarily by whether or not we leave the country more connected to the outside world than we found it, not whether we generate an instant democracy or win the war in record time.

The importance of this new direction within the Pentagon cannot be overstated, because it signals a "back to the future" outcome that will return America's national security establishment to the structure that served our nation so well prior to the historical aberration known as the cold war. Before we created the all-encompassing Department of Defense in 1947, America had two very distinct security establishments at its disposal: a Department of War and a department of everything else called the Department of the Navy. The War Department served as the "big stick" force that we busted out as required, while the Navy Department (especially the embedded Marines) served primarily as the "baton stick" force that we employed around

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Our Iraq Strategy

the world on a regular basis.

Why did America fuse these two entities into a unified whole? As the cold war was beginning defense strategists correctly foresaw a decades long hair-trigger standoff with the Soviets over nuclear weapons. In effect, national defense (War Department) and international security (Navy Department) became interchangeable and virtually indistinguishable, to defend America was to deter the threat of global nuclear Armageddon

As one small part of humanity that survived the madness of the cold war let me be the first to applaud that historic decision But let's be clear The dangers to system stability that we face today do not involve global nuclear war among great powers they involve undeterrable rogue regimes and transnational actors located exclusively inside the Gap, with the exception of the cold-war tailbone known as North Korea

What the Iraq occupation is making clear throughout the defense community is that we currently have a Department of War and a Department of Everything Else—the latter underfunded and overworked—coexisting uncomfortably inside the Department of Defense Over time a great divorce will occur because no house divided against itself can long stand This progressive bifurcation of the U. S. military into a Leviathan force focused on waging wars and a System Administrator force focused on winning the peace has been years in the making but it took the painful lessons of Iraq to really get the ball rolling

What this splitting of the force will mean to future presidential administrations is clear greater flexibility in dealing with the world as we find it. The Leviathan force will remain your father s military testosterone-fueled lethal and not subject to civilian law The Sys Admin force will end up being more your mother s military- supportive nonlethal and willing to submit to recognized authorities such as the International Criminal Court and the UN—Teddy Roosevelt meets Woodrow Wilson

What this bifurcation offers the rest of the world is twice as many opportunities to contribute to America s current scattershot efforts to export security throughout the Gap. The Leviathan is the classic come as you are coalition of the willing and since this flies-on-eyeballs crowd will feature Special Operations Forces as the pointy end of its spear, any nation able and willing to contribute its own small contingent of tough hombres can join this bandwagon on a first-come first-to-serve basis.

But contributing to the war-fighting half of the pie won t be the only way to gain a seat at the table because the follow-on Sys Admin effort will allow those nations unwilling to field combat forces in certain situations to nonetheless participate in the peace keeping force that must necessarily stand watch over the longer haul Having both forces is crucial for this reason There is a strong temptation for any administration—especially the pointlessly vindictive Bush White House—to tell allies that if they do not join in the war effort, they cannot participate in the rebuilding that follows What having both forces means is that we will be able to tell potential allies not only to "come as you are" for the war but also to "come when you can" for the peacekeeping

As we have learned in Iraq America can lose about 150 soldiers in six weeks of combat and/or lose about 500 soldiers to terrorism to date in the ensuing occupation Either way it hurts just the same if any country is willing to help out on one side of the war peace equation, we should simply be grateful for the sacrifice offered not picky about the timing

Here's what this splitting of the U.S. military means to the American people The National Security Act of 2005 tentatively sits on the far side of this national election. I fully expect that if Bush is reelected this piece of legislation will be profound moving America down the pathway of seriously reordering its national security establishment for the better Does that mean a Kerry administration wouldn t do the same? Not at all In fact, that administration may well be the far better choice to pull off such a dramatic reorganization given the growing distrust of many Americans and the world regarding the Bush administration s integrity on matters of security

My point is not to tell you how to vote but simply to make sure you ask the right questions If you think "preemptive war and all that violence in the Gap are going to go away simply by voting Bush Cheney out of office, you re kidding yourself The next administration is going to have its hands full with International-security issues no matter how much it may want to focus on other things So don t let either ticket off the hook on how it proposes to reshape our national defense establishment for the big tasks that lie ahead

As Americans seeking to choose our next president we all need to understand better the stakes at hand, for it is not the danger just ahead that we underestimate but the opportunity that lies beyond—the opportunity to make globalization truly global America stands at the peak of a world historical arc that marks globalization s tipping point from a closed club of the privileged few to a planetwide reality Making that strategic vision—that happy ending—come true will end war as we know it.

America has made this effort before and changed the world Now is the time to rededicate this nation to a new long-term strategy much as we did following World War II when we began exporting the security that has already made war only a memory for more than half the world's population enabling hundreds of millions to lift themselves out of poverty in the last couple of decades alone It is our responsibility and our obligation to give peace the same chance in the rest of the world ■

John Kerry

[*continued from page 105*] about. What he was: he was a naturally good litigator.

By 1982, Kerry reemerged and won the race for lieutenant governor. He even found a way to do something with the useless job, becoming active on a number of environmental issues, particularly acid rain. But he'd served only a year when Paul Tsongas was diagnosed with lymphoma and announced his decision to leave the Senate. Kerry threw himself into the race. He was a different candidate—quicker on his feet, more effective in the clinches. Either from Clem Costello or in the hurly-burly of the courtroom, he'd learned to counterpunch.

It was significant that in the primary, he beat James Shannon, another young liberal who'd been the protégé of the traditional Irish wing of the party. It was in this race that his fellow veterans first joined Kerry on a campaign. A group of Vietnam vets called the Doghunters pursued Shannon after the latter accused Kerry essentially of flip-flopping on his own Vietnam service during a televised debate. Shannon never recovered.

In the Senate throughout the 1980s, Kerry made his mark spelunking down the darkest caverns of what had become a reinvigorated secret government. He chased the illicit aid to the contra rebels in Nicaragua and the byzantine operations of a bank called BCCI, a sort of international ATM for black ops. And he did so alone as far outside in the clubby world of the Senate as he ever had been in Massachusetts.

"This was a bad case of bubonic plague," says Jack Blum, Kerry's investigator through those years. One prominent Democratic senator tried to sabotage Kerry's investigations, and the Republicans, riding Ronald Reagan's popularity, went after him as harshly as the Nixon people ever did. In fact, it is a kind of unprecedented historical parlay that John Kerry's name appears both on Nixon's White House tapes and in the notebooks of Oliver North.

For Kerry, the investigations were pure reform politics, but they also were leavened with a respect for what happens when people are tricked away from their investment in their government.

"It's antithetical to everything we are," he explains. "A government with secrets is accountable; a secret government is not. And when that happens, the American people are cheated of what is rightly theirs."

They have packed the hall in Baltimore. They pack the halls everywhere in a political year that has become a breeder reactor. John Kerry is winding into his tired punch line. "If they want this election to be about national security," he intones, "then we have three words for them we know they understand."

"Bring It On!" says the crowd.

"Bring It On!" responds John Kerry. And then he keeps talking, under his own applause.

He usually builds well, unleashing a torrent of emotion that drowns out briefly the fact that *he's still talking*. "The only person in this country who deserves to be laid off is George W. Bush," he says, and while the audience explodes, Kerry plows gamely—if unnecessarily—onward. "And we're going to do it," he continues, and the flood tide of feeling gradually thins into increasingly smaller creek beds on the banks of which lie the desiccated bones of his original point. It's a strange way to talk to folks.

Congressman Elijah Cummings represents the Seventh Congressional District in Baltimore, and he has come to Morgan State University this fine day in March first to support John Kerry. Mainly though, Cummings is here because the people in his district are angry enough to get him angry, and he has become the voice for all of them.

"I've never seen it like this," he says. "People are not only angry, but they're following stuff. Like Halliburton. Look. I didn't expect Halliburton and the contracts it got to be an issue in my district, but people are angry enough to make sure they know about it this time around."

Kerry's reception has been suitably raucous in what has been a remarkably raucous year. He still ducks a little at the intensity that comes back at him from the crowds.

"What I see now is what I saw in the 1980s and what I saw in Vietnam," Kerry says later. "The same kind of maneuvering behind the scenes, money and power moving, and a lack of accountability. There's a danger in that down the road. It facilitates terror. It creates a haven of privilege."

These themes are the subtext of his talk when he challenges George Bush with the familiar line about "knowing something about aircraft carriers for real." Kerry still leaves too much of the emotion to the people in front of the stage. He's not yet the vehicle of it. He did it once, long ago, and Cummings finds himself asked if Kerry can summon that up again, if he can engage more in Cummings's voters than their intellects and their simple affection.

"I think he can. I think he has to," says Cummings as the Kerry buses pull away.

In 1996, Kerry ran the race that made him. Governor William Weld was a jovial, red-headed Republican who acted the role of a Massachusetts pol as well as any Republican ever has and better than Kerry ever did. Weld joshed with reporters about his fondness for "amber colored liquid," conspicuously haunted Irish bars, and became as popular in Massachusetts as a Republican had a right to be.

Many Massachusetts Democrats never had been comfortable with Kerry. His pronounced fondness for the cameras had gotten him the nickname "Liveshot," which stuck. Many of them tacitly admitted that they'd be perfectly happy with the more amiable Weld, who was half Democrat anyway, at least in temperament and on the social issues. When Weld challenged Kerry, Weld was the native son, and Kerry again was from outside the tribe. By August, Weld had an eight-point lead.

The pol's moment came in October. The two men had debated eight times—intense exercises in high politics as far removed from Jim Curley

John Kerry

as Cicero is from the works of George M Cohan At the exhausted end of things though when the two men looked inside it was Kerry who found his inner Skeffington He spent with both hands. He pilloried Weld on kitchen-table issues like health care and he hared across the state in a campaign frenzy while Weld stayed in the statehouse, trading bon mots with the press and looking more and more like a man who thought the job was just too damned much trouble. Kerry won going away and stayed in the Senate For his part Weld changed jobs, wives and cities, wrote a couple of mystery novels, and disappeared from national politics as thoroughly as did the Whigs.

This is something else people should know about John Kerry When you lose to him he finishes you. Which is why it should have been a caution to the president when an anonymous Kerry advisor replied that if the White House were to go after Kerry on his divorce, or his wife s money, or some other area that Kerry deemed out of bounds then "everything is on the table"

This should be taken as a warning to George W Bush not only for his own prediections for bunker government but also those of his father In the 1980s, while John Kerry was involved in investigating the complicated and obscure scandals that kept popping up out of the renegade national security apparatus the elder George Bush ran between the raindrops The scandals swirled all around him but they never quite touched him He campaigned for president in 1988 while claiming to be "out of the loop" on the Iran-contra affair Four years later, after he was defeated by Bill Clinton for reelection it was revealed that contemporary notes taken by some of the Iran-contra principal actors gave the lie to that claim Bush pardoned everyone except Shoeless Joe Jackson on his way out of town

In 2001 almost immediately after taking office, George W Bush took a series of actions that seemed to complete his father s legacy in this regard First by executive order he sealed documents from the administrations of both his father and of Ronald Reagan—Clinton's papers got sealed along with the deal—that were due to be released and for which historians of the period had long hungered. Then he hired back a number of Iran contra's most memorable figures including Elliott Abrams whom his father had pardoned and John Negroponte Long before the attacks of September 11 2001 gave it irresistible momentum a movement inward a return to hunkered government was well under way led by some of the people with connections to both Presidents Bush and with whom Kerry was very familiar Now increasingly it seems that this election will be fought out partly in the shadowy regions between a government with secrets and a secret government with that difference squarely on the table That's terrain on which John Kerry has fought—at one point quite literally—his entire public life

Unless you understand the Weston dump you cannot understand how it happened for John Kerry in Iowa much less how he now has come to the point where next month he will give a speech accepting the party s nomination for president when the Democrats convene in Boston Weston is a woodsy precious suburb to the west of Boston Weston does not provide curbside rubbish pickup. So on the average Saturday a good percentage of the town s registered voters bundle up their trash and take it to the dump. In the average election season this means that they are greeted there by a clutch of candidates, stepping gingerly over the orange peels and tabbouleh shrapnel to ask for votes.

In 1980 Barney Frank was running for Congress to replace Robert Drinan whom Pope John Paul II had ordered to surrender his office Now if Kerry was from outside the tribe, Frank—a gay Jewish man from New Jersey—might as well have beamed in from Neptune. However he had the sharpest wit in American politics, which counts big in a pol, and he hired a woman named Mary Beth Cahill to run his campaign shop She called John Kerry, and John Kerry showed up, bright and early, to work the Weston dump for Barney Frank.

"I never had to ask him twice" Cahill recalls "No task for him was too small He was a volunteer attorney for us who watched polls in Waltham so there wouldn't be anything funny going on there and he went to the dump in Weston whenever we asked"

Cahill is as they say around the statehouse a piece of work A daughter of St Peter s Parish in Dorchester in a part of Boston where you identify yourself by parish and not by street address she got Frank elected to Congress and Patrick Leahy from Vermont reelected to the Senate building herself a minor legend She was working for Senator Edward Kennedy last November when John Kerry called her

His campaign was dying Once the consensus front runner he found himself overwhelmed by the emotions of the year He'd voted for the USA Patriot Act and for Bush s No Child Left Behind education reform and for the authorization for Bush to take the country to war in Iraq. Now towns were passing resolutions refusing to abide by the Patriot Act even some Republicans were railing at the education reform as an unfunded mandate and Howard Dean had gone sailing into the stratosphere by being unalterably opposed to the war in Iraq, which was daily looking like a bait-and switch proposition of the first order

Kerry seemed to have two choices: Either he could look like a waffler or he could look like a sucker And his campaign was coming apart. In one national poll, Kerry trailed Al Sharpton

Kerry fired his campaign manager and handed the effort over to veteran Kennedy hands Robert Shrum and Cahill They shrewdly staffed the campaign with people with whom Kerry was comfortable, notably veterans of the 1996 campaign against Weld They ended the intramural sniping And they got in the candidate s face.

"Sometimes," says a longtime Kerry friend, "you just got to slap him and say 'Get with it!'"

They sharpened the stump speech The message became government betrayal and lack of accountability, two themes that run through Kerry 's entire public life They brought out the Vietnam veterans again this time as the "Band of Brothers" who went all over the country campaigning for Kerry These included a man whom Kerry had pulled out of a river under heavy fire and former Georgia senator Max Cleland who'd lost three limbs in Vietnam and his Senate seat in 2002 to a campaign in which he was paired in television commercials with Osama bin Laden by a man who avoided military service because of a high school football injury This tactic was enough to get Kerry genuinely angry in public

The new staff immediately made two critical assumptions. The first was that the Dean campaign was more phenomenon than actual movement one bad loss, say in Iowa and the bubble would burst And, second that as bad as things looked in New Hampshire where Kerry was polling fourth in some surveys, Iowa was worth the gamble. "We always had tracking that looked good there," Cahill says "And we got good coverage there on local TV and in the local newspapers"

So they committed everything to Iowa, pulling staff out of New Hampshire and convincing Kerry to mortgage one of his homes for the effort. They shrewdly got the endorsement of Christie Vilsack, the wife of Governor Thomas Vilsack who d said he d keep himself neutral in the caucuses. They put the candidate on the road and they kept him there

"I had to learn" Kerry says "that a presidential campaign is different from any other campaign in its intensity and in its pace and in the precision with which you have to make sure you re saying certain things Sometimes you can get sloppy"

As always, Kerry seemed to be discovering his gift—and his taste—for campaigning on the fly By the end of it for all practical purposes he d ended the race for the nomination almost as soon as it had begun The endorsements rolled in so did the votes and it seemed everyone had been there with him all along, because that is what happens with pols who win No matter what was said no matter what was done no matter what you thought of the principal Cuz, everybody comes to the wedding and everybody comes to the wake

This night in Atlanta surprises me as much as did that long ago evening on Falmouth Harbor by the sea. I never thought I d see this—an all star gospel choir transported by the spirit shaking the rafters in a place called the Tabernacle making a joyful noise unto the Lord and a hell of a warm-up for John Kerry who s running late but nobody cares because this choir has sailed past the seventh level of the cherubim Oh what Bill Clinton would have done with this crowd

John Kerry hits the stage when he is supposed to, and there's no indication that the ringing bal omes have reached him until he starts talking about Max Cleland who's seated stage left and what the Republicans did to him in 2002, and Kerry's head dips ever so slightly and that s the signal If he s telling stories, it means he s coming quickly to the point And it was a disgrace what they did," Kerry says, and the crowd explodes. Cleland waves with his one remaining limb Kerry doesn t say anything else

John Kerry s story always had soul, but John Kerry rarely showed it He gave it up for a political career At least that's what we thought we knew about him. He was blood less, lost in the gated abstractions of his mind He wasn t in any way justified nor sanctified nor initiated into the tribe He walked the walk but he couldn't talk the talk

If this half finished political season is about anything, it s about John Kerry walking back up the marble steps and facing the Mall again remembering the power that the audience gave back to him It s about his reclaiming those parts of his biography outside of which he s walked ever since they weren t enough to get him elected in Lowell It's about walking over strangely familiar ground with a slower tread and a wiser eye and it s about redeeming passion for passion's own sweet sake about allowing yourself to be thankful for what it can do for your ideas, about grace notes and regret and it's daring to be cool again just for a moment, as the occasion demands.

Here he is with the music rising all around him down into the roiling crowd to work it along its edges. Up on the stage Max Cleland sits not far from Congressman John Lewis, two bloodied veterans of the two great movements that formed John Kerry and that transformed the home state that he came to represent long before it came grudgingly to adopt him

John Lewis looks down from the stage at John Kerry, who s shaking every hand and smiling a craggy smile that's not in any way easy or glib, but no less genuine for that

"Look at him," Lewis says "He s doing fine isn't he? I mean he's getting better and we're working on him We re working on him"

Lewis then gives me a grin and it s the same dumb grin that Chris Greeley gave me in that Falmouth saloon twenty years ago. Go on, this grin says, underestimate him. Lose yourself in the surface bullshit—the moneyed wife the plummy accent the windsurfing. Go ahead it says, throw yourself into the national cartoon in which it's a story every time the guy receives communion because he's getting heat from a bunch of Roman Catholic bishops who ought to be lighting candles every day for the next decade in thanksgiving that they weren t all hauled off in a RICO proceeding. Go ahead and do all that the grin says and there he ll be at the end of it—stubborn willful John Kerry with his Ent like presence and his drifting periods of political walkabout, dipping into the crowd until he looks something like a pol

Does he feel it coming back at him again? you wonder Does he feel the heat as well as see the light? The magic is there a gift, right there in his hand Does he have it in him to close his fingers around it? And if he does, will he notice that he s made a fist?

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(This Way Out) (BY MIKE SACKS)

Missed Connections

Saw you on the Crosstown D4, late afternoon, May 7. You were weaning a red dress carrying a black purse. Departed at Twenty-fourth. Too shy to say hi. Respond here? **D4**

Am responding. Never done this before. Interests: movies, jogging, gardening. Yours? **Black Purse**

I too...enjoy gardening. Have always dreamed of owning a country home, to awaken each morning to the trilling of canaries. **D4**

Picture a house more beautiful than those found in the fanciest of periodicals. Rosebushes next to a babbling brook. A hand-crafted swing. Two children, perhaps with the names Audrey and Joshua. The perfect home, a perfect life! **Purse**

Yes, two beautiful kids, two ideal names! A red picket fence surrounding the entire property! But the swing, so silly. **D4**

Children with doelike eyes, so wise for their years. I can see them now! But no swing? **Purse**

Something so gauche about a swing, no? Too Maurice Chevalier. Not enough Clark Gable. **D4**

Clark Gable, indeed! One of my favorites. But, really, no swing? As a child growing up in the city, there was nothing that I wished for more ... besides that perfect man! **Purse**

Just something ... how do I put this? A little too yearning, a tad too needy? Perhaps I'm not expressing myself well. **D4**

A small swing, then? In the corner of a long porch? Overlooking the garden? While we enjoy freshly squeezed lemonade? **Purse**

It's just ... are you familiar with that life-insurance commercial, the one with the elderly couple? They're swinging and they're talking? About death? Perhaps it's that connotation, perhaps something else, but it's not doing anything for me. Sorry. **D4**

Can you not compromise on this? A swing, as simple as it stands? Think about it? **Purse**

What kind of lemonade do you like? Tart? Sweet? **D4**

Forget the lemonade! I want to talk about the swing! **Purse**

My love, as much as it pains me to write: I cannot accept the notion of a swing. I, too, have dreams. Dreams that include no reference to a swing. And for that I most sincerely apologize. **D4**

You bastard! For this you extinguish our dreams, our desires? A goddamn swing? **Purse**

I shall go one step further. A babbling brook? Gone. Your taste is suspect. That I knew from the start. **D4**

And this coming from someone who wishes for a hideous red picket fence? The irony, it's delicious. **Purse**

My darling, please. We have our whole lives... **D4**

But, really, a red picket fence? Is it your wish to construct a New Orleans–style bordello? **Purse**

A bordello? I grew up with a red picket fence! Are you implying that I grew up in a whorehouse? **D4**

I am implying nothing. Beyond the fact that I am unhappy. Perhaps it is not the swing. Perhaps it is more. **Purse**

A separation? Is that what you're reaching for? Keep your dream house. The imaginary mortgage was beyond my grasp. Build your swing. Create your new life. **D4**

But can we not work it out? Could it possibly be too late? **Purse**

The children shall remain mine through my dreams. The fragments of happiness that I had with you shall stay locked away for good. Let us make the most of it ... and that shall be that. **D4**

That shall be that? When, pray tell, shall the children visit me through *my* dreams? Weekends? Holidays? **Purse**

Holidays? I think not. I shall have my lawyer iron out the details. **D4**

Do that. And while you're at it, have him tear down that hideous red picket fence. The house is starting to attract sailors. **Purse**

I take back what I said about the house. I want to keep it through my own memories. It is no longer yours! **D4**

You bastard! I put just as much dreamy thought into that house as you! **Purse**

Mr. D4, this is David Knight, Miss Purse's attorney. Leave the dreamy thoughts to Miss Purse before this gets messy. **Knight**

Mr. Knight, my name is Jack Brenner, and I am Mr. D4's attorney. Messy? You haven't seen messy. **Brenner**

Saw you on the Crosstown D4, May 28. You were weaning a red dress, carrying a black purse. You have been served. Respond here. **D4**

Never done this before. Am countersuing. Now what? Let it begin. Yes, let it begin! **Purse**

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